

Eugenic ideology and racial fitness in Queensland, 1900-1950

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Abstract

Between 1900 and 1950, ideas about racial fitness were widespread in Queensland. These ideas were influenced by eugenic ideology at this time, despite the absence of formal eugenics organisations in the state. This thesis examines the expression of concepts of racial fitness and eugenics in various discourses in Queensland during the first half of the twentieth century. It finds that this expression focused on marginalised groups. In many cases, those who expressed such ideas held a significant degree of power over these groups of people. It argues that the presence of these ideas in debates about vulnerable groups is a significant aspect of Queensland history.

The thesis examines a range of issues related to concerns about eugenics, racial fitness and degeneration. Research conducted for this thesis has found that discourses relating to: mental hygiene and the treatment of mental defectives; the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state; education and vocational training of the young; infant and maternal welfare; and immigration, were pervaded by these concerns. The study focuses on four areas in which eugenic and racial fitness ideologies were found to be particularly evident. These areas are: the treatment and control of mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults; the various debates which occurred about “non-white” races in Queensland, with a particular focus on debates about the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state; children and education; and the range of issues which centred around the “white” race in Queensland.

This study utilises official government publications, professional communications, periodicals, and popular newspapers as sources. The thesis contributes to a greater understanding of Queensland society, and also contributes to the historiography of the international eugenics movement. It fills a gap in the historiography of the eugenics movement in Australia by providing an examination of ideas about eugenics and racial fitness in Queensland. The emphasis of this study on language and ideas contributes to a discussion about international eugenic discourse which few Australian historians have explicitly addressed. Its examination of the influence of eugenic ideas in specific areas of discourse in Queensland provides a new perspective on the history of these aspects of Queensland society.

Declaration

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except where acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

Emily Wilson

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Introduction

This thesis examines the incidence of eugenic ideology and ideas about racial fitness in public discourse in Queensland between 1900 and 1950. While the eugenics movement in Australia has been the subject of much recent study, there has not yet been a sustained examination of eugenics in Queensland. The most obvious reason for this is that no eugenics organisation ever existed in the state. This thesis finds, however, that discourse on racial fitness dominated various debates in Queensland from the nineteenth century onwards, and further that eugenic ideology influenced these debates during the twentieth century. The more limited expression of eugenic ideas in Queensland reflected preoccupations that were specific to that state's intellectual, political and social climate.

In arguing that discourse on racial fitness dominated various debates in Queensland from the nineteenth century onwards, and that eugenic ideology influenced these debates during the twentieth century, the thesis draws wider conclusions about both Queensland society, and the international eugenics movement. To the extent that Queensland develops a further model of how to understand the impact of eugenics, this thesis contributes to the historiography of eugenics. Equally it provides a contribution to Queensland history, by exploring the reinforcement there of prevalent ideas resulting from the arrival of a new

ideology of eugenics in the twentieth century, and the potential for new policy directions which accrued in its wake.

The eugenics movement was preeminently able to adapt to diverse societies. This adaptability aided the dissemination of eugenic philosophy, but at the same time it challenges the notion of eugenics as a single movement. The success of the eugenics movement cannot be measured simply in terms of legislative outcomes, as its success at translating theory into legislation was varied and uneven. In Queensland, no specific or direct legislation was introduced as a result of pressure from eugenicists. Rather, the success of the energetic eugenics movement in promoting its ideology allowed for a significant influence on a wide range of social actions and public policies. The thesis contends that explicitly eugenic philosophy did not need to be articulated in Queensland to the same degree as it was in other regions, as ideologies of racial fitness focused on excluding the “unfit” were embedded in discourse in the state.

Queensland is of particular interest to a study of ideologies of eugenics and racial fitness, due to certain factors either unique to or more pronounced in the state. During the nineteenth century, policy makers in Queensland introduced a number of laws aimed at controlling elements of the population identified as unproductive members of society, and also

at members of non-European races.¹ By the early twentieth century, many groups perceived by international eugenics organisations as threatening to racial improvement had already been targeted and segregated in Queensland. The eugenics movement in Queensland, as in the rest of Australia, must also be seen in the context of the “White Australia” policy, a collection of legislation introduced from federation in 1901.² This legislation aimed at maintaining the purity of the “white” race in Australia.³ Although the policy was based on federal legislation, its formulation was particularly influenced by circumstances in Queensland in the late nineteenth century, and many of its provisions were more strictly adhered to in Queensland than in any other state.⁴ The White Australia Policy was an important turning point both for the treatment of non-European races and for the self-perception of the “white” race.⁵ It represented beliefs about racial purity and the

¹ Raymond Evans, “The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland”, in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), p. 84.

² D. M. Gibb, *The making of “white Australia”* (Melbourne: Victorian Historical Association, 1979); A. C. Palfreman, *The administration of the White Australia Policy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967); Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967); A. T. Yarwood, “The white Australia policy”, in F. S. Stevens, ed., *Racism: the Australian experience: a study of race prejudice in Australia*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 1974), pp. 164-72.

³ Humphrey McQueen, *A new Britannia: an argument concerning the social origins of Australian radicalism and nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin, 1986), pp. 34-5; A. T. Yarwood and M. J. Knowling, *Race relations in Australia: a history* (Sydney: Methuen, 1982), pp. 225, 227, 235, 251.

⁴ Andrew Markus, *Australian race relations 1788-1993* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994), pp. 113-14, 117; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 41-2, 45-8, 50-1; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 221, 227-28.

⁵ Patricia Grimshaw, “Federation as a turning point in Australian history”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 118 (2001), p. 26.

improvement of the race that had much in common with eugenic philosophy.⁶

This thesis examines the role of eugenic ideas in rationalising and extending ideologies that had been dominant in nineteenth century Queensland. It does so for the first half of the twentieth century, an era when increased state control and “scientific management” of various aspects of life were becoming apparent internationally. The peculiar concatenation of fears about unproductive sections of the community, racial tensions and hopes of improving the “white” race in Queensland meant that concerns about racial fitness were entrenched in discourse and structures of authority in the state.

Research conducted for this thesis found that in Queensland, eugenic ideology and ideas about racial fitness were influential in a broad range of state concerns. These included: mental hygiene and the treatment of mental defectives; policies directed towards the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state; education and vocational training of the young; infant and maternal welfare; and immigration. Accordingly, this thesis focuses on an investigation of eugenics and racial fitness in the four areas in which these ideas were found to be most evident. These areas are: the treatment and control of mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults;

⁶ Michael Roe, *Nine Australian Progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought, 1890-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 19.

the various debates that occurred about “non-white” races in Queensland, with a particular focus on debates about the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state; children and education; and the range of issues centred around the improvement of the “white” race in Queensland.

The implementation of legislation and programmes in Queensland relating to these areas was not influenced directly by eugenics organisations. Debate surrounding these issues, however, was pervaded by rhetoric that referred to eugenics and racial fitness. The attitude of influential individuals in Queensland society towards marginalised groups of people was inevitably affected by these ideas. This thesis follows the direction indicated by Rob Watts in the conclusion of his 1994 article, “Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history”, in which he states that:

... it may be a mistake to look to particular instances of legislative or policy achievements attributable to eugenicists ... It is far more in a body of discursive practices and institutions that we should look for their past influence and continuing presence.⁷

Definitions

The term *eugenics* itself was not invented until 1883. In this year, Sir Francis Galton coined the term in his work on the inheritance of

⁷ Rob Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 40, 3 (1994), p. 330.

intelligence, *Inquiries into human faculty and its development*.⁸ Since this time, the definition of eugenics has been a subject of controversy. It is almost impossible to establish a comprehensive definition that captures all the contemporary nuances of the word. Even within the eugenics movement there was little consensus on the subject.⁹ An examination of the various meanings of the word and the ways in which it was used, or, just as importantly, not used, in debate throughout this period, is essential for an understanding of the influence of the eugenics movement.

From the 1860s onwards, long before he invented the term *eugenics* to refer to them, Galton was writing about his ideas of inheritance and racial fitness. One of his earliest works on these topics was the 1865 essay "Hereditary talent and character", published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and subsequently expanded into a book called *Hereditary Genius*.¹⁰ In 1883, he coined the term *eugenics*, defining it as

... the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had.¹¹

⁸ Francis Galton, *Inquiries into human faculty and its development*, 2nd edition (London: J. M. Dent, [1907]).

⁹ Howard Horwitz, "Always with us", *American Literary History*, 10, 2 (1998), p. 320.

¹⁰ Daniel J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics: genetics and the uses of human heredity*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 3.

¹¹ Galton, *Inquiries into human faculty and its development*, p. 17.

After providing this definition, Galton continued to elaborate on these ideas.¹² He saw eugenics as a natural outgrowth of his cousin Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection.¹³

In 1911, Charles B. Davenport, the director of the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor in America, and an extremely influential eugenicist in that country, stated that eugenics was "the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding", thus considerably narrowing Galton's definitions to the scientific and hereditarian, although he also acknowledged Galton's original definition.¹⁴ In contrast to Davenport's narrow definition, Caleb Williams Saleeby claimed a much broader scope for eugenic influence in his 1909 work *Parenthood and race culture*. Saleeby asserted that this work provided "a first attempt to survey and define the whole field of eugenics".¹⁵ The primary aim of eugenics, he argued, was to promote "selection for parenthood based upon the facts of heredity."¹⁶ This was the means, however, and not the end: "Our end is a better race." Saleeby described eugenics as "at once a science, and a religion, based upon the laws of life, and recognising in them the foundation of society".¹⁷ He thus claimed all aspects of society

¹² Francis Galton, "Eugenics: its definition, scope and aims", in *Essays in eugenics* (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1909), p. 35.

¹³ Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English thought: the interaction between biological and social theory* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 99-101.

¹⁴ Charles Benedict Davenport, *Heredity in relation to eugenics* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), p. 1.

¹⁵ C. W. Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture: an outline of eugenics* (London: Cassell, 1909), p. vii.

¹⁶ Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. viii.

¹⁷ Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. ix.

as potential sites of eugenic interest, and indeed, by his statement that eugenics was a religion, appeared to extend it into the realm of the spiritual.

Assertions like these made formulating a comprehensive definition of eugenics difficult. As late as 1938, C. P. Blacker, then Secretary of the Eugenics Society in London, in a letter to V. H. Wallace, who had recently re-established the Victorian Eugenics Society, found himself unable, or unwilling, to provide a comprehensive definition of eugenics.¹⁸ Blacker stated that eugenics was supported most strongly by those who understood it least, and that the complicated nature of the topic meant that those who truly understood it found it hard to be unqualified advocates.¹⁹

It is important to note the difference between “positive” and “negative” eugenic strategies. Positive eugenics encompassed strategies aimed at encouraging the “fit” to breed, while negative eugenics referred to measures that attempted to discourage or prevent the “unfit” from breeding. Blacker stated in *Eugenics in prospect and retrospect* that the terms positive and negative eugenics were coined by Saleeby with

¹⁸ Blacker was a psychiatrist; he supported birth control campaigns for eugenic reasons (Richard Soloway, “The ‘perfect contraceptive’: eugenics and birth control research in Britain and America in the interwar years”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30, 4 (1995), p. 643).

¹⁹ C. P. Blacker, Eugenics Society, London to V. H. Wallace, Eugenics Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 11 October 1938, SA/EUG Box 48, E3, Wellcome Institute Library, London.

Galton's approval.²⁰ Galton himself did not generally focus on "negative" eugenics, although there is no doubt that he also supported these measures.²¹ Related to positive and negative eugenics were debates over whether society would be best improved through population quantity or quality.²² Those who believed in the differential birth rate argued that middle class families were practicing contraception while working class families were breeding uncontrollably.²³ Some eugenicists argued that middle class families should be encouraged to reproduce more; some argued that working class families should be discouraged from breeding as much, and others disapproved on principle of any form of contraception. Negative eugenic strategies also encompassed sterilisation of those whom eugenicists considered "unfit" to breed. Blacker told Wallace that negative eugenics was associated with sex, while positive eugenics was more focused on and associated with economics.²⁴

Confusion over the precise definition of eugenics did not hinder its followers in their enthusiastic efforts at promoting eugenic philosophy. From the early twentieth century, eugenics organisations proved to be skilled at propaganda and the dissemination of their beliefs.²⁵ Eugenics

²⁰ Quoted in Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 321.

²¹ Galton, *Essays in eugenics*, p. 100.

²² G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain 1900-1914* (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976), p. 36.

²³ Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 101.

²⁴ Eugenics Society, London to V. H. Wallace, Melbourne, 11 October 1938, SA/EUG Box 48, E3, Wellcome Institute Library, London.

²⁵ Papers of the Eugenics Society, SA/EUG, Box 48, E2-5, Wellcome Institute Archives; Garland E. Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, 1910-1940: an essay in institutional history", *Osiris*, 2nd series, 2 (1986), pp. 227, 238; Leonard Darwin, "Introduction", in Eugenics Education Society, ed., *Problems in*

societies supplied speakers for lectures, distributed pamphlets and study materials, held eugenic exhibitions, and on occasion produced films.²⁶ Daniel Bernardi has pointed out that a rise in adherence to theories of biological determinism coincided with the ascent of popular cinema.²⁷ Many early films thus reflected a belief in a hierarchy of human cultures, and supporters of eugenics used cinema to popularise their ideas. An exhibition held in conjunction with the First International Eugenics Congress included displays of charts, pedigrees, photographs and specimens illustrative of heredity, as well as relics of Charles Darwin, Galton, and Gregor Mendel.²⁸ In Australia, too, eugenics organisations placed a high priority on public opinion and propaganda.²⁹

Despite their success in promoting eugenic ideas, many people, even those who joined eugenic societies, remained reluctant to use the word *eugenics* itself.³⁰ This caution was partly due to a fear of criticism, as well as a certain public mistrust, whether actual or perceived, of the word

eugenics: papers communicated to the First International Eugenics Congress, held at the University of London, July 24th to 30th, 1912 (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1912); Galton, "Eugenics", p. 42; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 60-2; Edward J. Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics: expert authority and the Mental Deficiency Bill", *British Journal for the History of Science*, 24, 80 (1991), p. 49; Faith Schenk and A. S. Parkes, "The activities of the Eugenics Society", *Eugenics Review*, 60 (1968), p. 143.

²⁶ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 60-2.

²⁷ Daniel Bernardi, *The birth of whiteness: race and the emergence of US cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 7.

²⁸ First International Eugenics Congress, London 1912, invitation circular 7200, p. 7, PRE/A407, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹ Judith Bessant, "Described, measured and labelled: eugenics, youth policy and moral panic in Victoria in the 1950s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 31 (1991), p. 21; Margaret Conley, "Citizens – protect your birthright!: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), p. 12.

³⁰ Larson has discussed the absence of the word *eugenics* from debate over the 1913 *Mental Deficiency Act*, in "The rhetoric of eugenics", pp. 52-3.

eugenics.³¹ It is noticeable that definitions of eugenics, both contemporary and historical, tended to amount to a brief precis of eugenic beliefs, reflecting the difficulty of establishing clear boundaries for the definition of eugenics, while suggesting the myriad ways in which eugenics could be applied to everyday life.³² The ambiguity of definitions of eugenics has raised questions for historians attempting to study the impact of the eugenics movement.³³

In contrast to caution in the use of the word *eugenics* were ideas about racial fitness. This concept was a national preoccupation in Australia during the twentieth century, and encompassed a wide range of concerns. For the purposes of this study, eugenic ideas have been identified as those which demonstrate a conviction that a better race could be achieved by the manipulation of the reproduction of individuals.³⁴ This is not the sole focus of the study, which also explores

³¹ This reluctance will be explored in greater detail in Chapter One. It is merely noted here in order to demonstrate the problematic nature of the definition of eugenics.

³² Joy Damousi, "Modernism, Socialism and Communism: a gender critique", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 32 (1992), p. 35; Mark Haller, *Eugenics: hereditarian attitudes in American thought* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1963), p. 3; Kerreen M. Reiger, *The disenchantment of the home: modernizing the Australian family 1880-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 195; Grant Rodwell, "Lessons in eugenics from Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopedia*", *Education and Research Perspectives*, 24, 1 (1997), p. 99. Marouf Hasian identifies eight "categories of eugenic meaning", a comprehensive list which encompasses both genetic and environmental reforms, and which leaves very few social policies outside the influence of eugenics. See Marouf Arif Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics in Anglo-American thought* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 28-9, for an elaboration of the eight categories.

³³ See, for example, many of the papers published in Martin Crotty, John Germov and Grant Rodwell, eds, *A race for a place: eugenics, Darwinism and social thought and practice in Australia: proceedings of the History and Sociology of Eugenics Conference, University of Newcastle, 27-28 April 2000* (Callaghan: Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Newcastle, 2000).

³⁴ Carl Jay Bajema, "Introduction", in Bajema, ed., *Eugenics: then and now* (Stroudsburg: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1976), p. 2.

a variety of beliefs related to racial fitness. Concepts of racial fitness were much more explicitly referred to in Queensland during the period under review than was eugenics. Social problems at this time were often framed in relation to their potential threat to racial fitness. This dissertation explores the intersections between beliefs about racial fitness and eugenic ideology during the first half of the twentieth century in Queensland discourse. It examines the influence of eugenic beliefs on the rhetoric of racial fitness present in Queensland from the nineteenth century onwards. This has allowed the thesis to examine critically both embedded structures of power in Queensland society, and the international influence of eugenic beliefs.

The thesis argues that the ill-defined and ambiguous nature of the word *eugenics* in fact allowed eugenic ideology to resonate within diverse communities, speaking to concerns in the decentralised and under-industrialised state of Queensland; a very different society from the ones in which eugenics originated. In some ways, eugenics could be considered to be a term which is not particularly useful to historians, since it was so open to redefinition by those who adopted it for their various purposes. For the purposes of this thesis, however, the ambiguity of the definition is in fact more useful. It has allowed the thesis to explore connections between eugenics and related concepts by focusing on language and ideas expressed in Queensland at this time about a number of different groups of people.

Time period

The focus of this thesis on the ideology and language of eugenics and racial fitness makes a discussion of the historical antecedents of these interrelated concepts necessary. The idea of improving the genetic inheritance of a race through manipulating breeding has a long history.³⁵ The concept of human progress as a continuing struggle with nature developed in the mid-eighteenth century, partly from the arguments of Thomas Malthus, who introduced the idea that life was a struggle for survival.³⁶ He argued that a large segment of humanity was doomed to misery by an imbalance between productive and reproductive capacities. Progress, economic competition and the “struggle for existence” were common ideological preoccupations at this time in Europe and America, and these ideas influenced debate in Queensland.³⁷ During the 1850s, Herbert Spencer popularised the word *evolution* and the phrase “survival of the fittest”.³⁸ Spencer’s ideas on evolution, struggle, and the perfectibility of the human race were characterised by racial determinism

³⁵ Plato discussed the genetic qualities of ideal citizens in *The Republic*. See Bajema, Introduction, p. 1; Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the rat was white: a historical view of psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 77; Karl Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics* 2nd ed. (London: Dulau, 1909), pp. 23-5; R. Grant Steen, *DNA and destiny: nature and nurture in human behaviour* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1996), p. 34.

³⁶ Marvin Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory: a history of theories of culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1968), p. 114; Steen, *DNA and destiny*, pp. 35-6.

³⁷ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 105; Raymond Evans, “‘Keep white the strain’: race relations in a colonial setting”, in Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland: a history of exclusion, exploitation and extermination*, 3rd ed. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1993), p. 12.

³⁸ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 128.

and an emphasis on hereditary factors in human behaviour.³⁹ In 1859, Charles Darwin published the extremely influential work *Origin of Species*. Darwin adapted Malthus's ideas of perpetual struggle, but argued that this struggle was inevitable and necessary for the progress of civilisation.⁴⁰

These ideas not only contributed to a tradition of hereditarian thought, but also provided the foundation for a rationale of colonisation that was strongly adhered to in Australia, and particularly Queensland.⁴¹ They led to the belief that "inferior" races would "disappear" at contact with "superior" ones, as Count J. A. de Gobineau argued in 1853.⁴² In 1855, Alfred Wallace contended that this process would improve the race.⁴³ Theories of racial and hereditary determinism, and scientific racism, grew in popularity throughout the nineteenth century, a phenomenon that was also apparent in Queensland.⁴⁴ Other hereditarian theories such as degeneration, and craniometry and its offshoot phrenology, were also popular in nineteenth-century Europe, although they had less direct influence on Queensland discourse.⁴⁵

³⁹ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 125, 129-30.

⁴⁰ Guthrie, *Even the rat was white*, p. 78; Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 116-17.

⁴¹ Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 13; Ross Laurie, "Not a matter of taste but a healthy racial instinct": race relations in Australia in the 1920s: racial ideology and the popular press, Hons thesis, History Department, Griffith University, 1989, pp. 11-12.

⁴² Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 103. Harris argues that Gobineau's theories had a direct influence on the racist policies of the Nazi party.

⁴³ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 123.

⁴⁴ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 80-1, 100-1; Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 14.

⁴⁵ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 99; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 17; Axel Liégois, "Hidden philosophy and theology in Morel's theory of degeneration

During the nineteenth century, more statistical data than ever before was gathered on social problems such as prostitution, crime, alcoholism, and disease, thus leading to increased anxiety about these problems, particularly among the middle classes.⁴⁶ A number of reform movements developed in response to the categorisation of this data.⁴⁷ At the same time, a number of degeneration theories developed in Europe, and as the century progressed, became increasingly concerned with the “bad” heredity of individuals and particular groups.⁴⁸ The eugenics movement had antecedents in nineteenth century reform movements concerned with social problems and degeneration. In other ways, the ideals of the eugenics movement represented a reaction against nineteenth-century ideology, particularly against laissez-faire philosophy and Social

and nosology”, *History of Psychiatry*, 2 (1991), p. 425; Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 513; William H. Schneider, *Quality and quantity: the quest for biological regeneration in twentieth century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 9; Edward Shorter, *A history of psychiatry: from the era of the asylum to the age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), p. 94.

⁴⁶ Carol Bacchi, “Evolution, eugenics and women: the impact of scientific theories on attitudes towards women, 1870-1920”, in Elizabeth Windschuttle, ed., *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on Australia, 1788-1978* (Auckland: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 133-34; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 72; Rosalind Kidd, *The way we civilise: Aboriginal Affairs – the untold story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁷ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 255; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 6; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 2; David McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, *Melbourne Working Papers*, 4 (1982/3), p. 18.

⁴⁸ Richard Cleminson, *Anarchism, science and sex: eugenics in eastern Spain, 1900-1937* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 17, 41; Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 54; Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, pp. 510-13; Shorter, *A history of psychiatry*, pp. 93-4. See also Liégois, “Hidden philosophy and theology in Morel’s theory of degeneration and nosology”, who argues that the development of Benedict-Augustin Morel’s theory of degeneration was influenced by moral and religious considerations (p. 421).

Darwinism.⁴⁹ Although Social Darwinism and evolutionary beliefs heavily influenced the eugenics movement, Social Darwinism adopted a fatalistic approach to natural selection, while eugenicists believed that human beings should take control of the process.⁵⁰ This reflected a general twentieth century trend towards increasing state involvement in matters that had previously been considered private.⁵¹

The eugenics movement thus developed from many older traditions, and many of the ideas it espoused were not unique. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the period of its greatest popular influence as a discrete movement began after 1900.⁵² Rob Watts has argued that the increase in popularity was so marked that the first half of the twentieth century could be categorised as “the age of eugenics”.⁵³ There are a number of

⁴⁹ John Docker, “Can the centre hold?: conceptions of the state 1890-1925”, in Sydney Labour History Group, ed., *What rough beast?: the state and social order in Australian history* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 58; Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), pp. 3, 10.

⁵⁰ Harris, *The rise of evolutionary theory*, pp. 122-23; Harris points out that Spencer’s ideas, many of which predated Darwin’s theories, also dealt with a struggle for survival in the social sphere (pp. 123-25). There was not, of course, a binary division between Social Darwinists and eugenicists, rather eugenic ideas represented an extension of Social Darwinism: Michael Banton, *The idea of race* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), p. 89; Jones, *Social Darwinism and English thought*, p. 99.

⁵¹ Keith Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy and the welfare state c.1800-1993* (Keele, Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1995), pp. 148, 151. Laybourn emphasises that social policy during any century is not uniform, but rather reveals conflicting tendencies (p. 127); nevertheless, the extension of state intervention during the early twentieth century was marked, and illustrated the emergence of new values in society at this time (pp. 177-78).

⁵² Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 226; David Barker, “The biology of stupidity: genetics, eugenics and mental deficiency in the inter-war years”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 22, (1989), p. 349; Ann Curthoys, “Eugenics, feminism and birth control: the case of Marion Piddington”, *Hecate*, 15, 1 (1989), p. 74; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 25; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 57-8; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 2; McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, p. 18; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 2; Schneider, *Quality and quantity*, pp. 2-3.

⁵³ Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, p. 319.

reasons for this. One of the hindrances to a popular acceptance of eugenics during the nineteenth century was the lack of information about the transmission of characteristics. Galton's scientific and mathematic skills were not rigorous or accurate, and the lack of objective knowledge about the processes of heredity led to a stalling of the movement in the 1890s.⁵⁴ The rediscovery of Mendelian genetics in 1900 led to a renewed interest in issues of hereditary transmission of traits.⁵⁵ This in turn led to a renewed interest in eugenics,⁵⁶ despite the fact that some eugenicists disagreed with Mendel's conclusions.⁵⁷ A contributor to the *Yale Review* in 1913 argued that the new "cult" of eugenics was due partly to the rediscovery of Mendel's laws.⁵⁸

Another reason was also cited in this article for the increasing popularity of eugenics: the author argued that demands on taxpayers were becoming more onerous, and that groups such as paupers, the insane and criminals were becoming more of a burden on good, taxpaying citizens.⁵⁹ The fear that there was a growing population of "useless"

⁵⁴ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 19.

⁵⁵ Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", p. 226. Karl Pearson's development of "biometry" and August Weismann's theory of the "germ plasm" also contributed to this increase in popularity (Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 116-17).

⁵⁶ Barker, "The biology of stupidity", p. 353; W. Jethro Brown, "Economic welfare and racial vitality", *Economic Record*, 3, 4 (1927), p. 16; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 4.

⁵⁷ For example, in his 1923 book based on articles written for the *Eugenics Review*, R. Ruggles Gates suggested that too much emphasis had been placed on Mendelian views of heredity (*Heredity and eugenics* (London: Constable, 1923), p. vii). See also Horwitz, "Always with us", p. 322.

⁵⁸ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 72.

⁵⁹ "Improvement of the race: disease as an aid to 'natural selection'", *The Times* (London), 2 June 1911, p. 6; Frank Dikötter, "Race culture: recent perspectives on the

citizens in society, representing a charge on “useful” citizens, was increasing. Although the first of these factors was not widely discussed in Queensland, the issue of “useless” citizens was of great importance in the state.

In 1963, Mark Haller argued that the eugenics movement could be divided into three main eras. The first was from 1870 to 1905, before the greatest popularity of the movement; Haller called this “a period of preparation”.⁶⁰ The second period identified by Haller lasted from 1905 to 1930, and was the era of the eugenics movement’s greatest influence.⁶¹ It was a time when many eugenics organisations advocated the sterilisation of the intellectually impaired, and also when eugenics became associated with racism.⁶² The third period, after 1930, saw the rapid decline of eugenics, due to scientific advances that exposed many of the inaccuracies of eugenic methods, and also to the use made of eugenic doctrines in Nazi Germany.⁶³

history of eugenics”, *The American Historical Review*, 103, 2 (1998), p. 469; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 72.

⁶⁰ Haller, *Eugenics*, p. 6.

⁶¹ Haller, *Eugenics*, p. 58.

⁶² Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 250; Gotz Aly, Peter Chroust and Christian Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi medicine and racial hygiene* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 3; Barker, “The biology of stupidity”, p. 360; Kevles *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 132-31; Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi connection: eugenics, American racism, and German National Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 28; Gerald O’Brien, “Protecting the social body: use of the organism metaphor in fighting the ‘menace of the feeble-minded’”, *Mental Retardation*, 37, 3 (1999), pp. 190-91.

⁶³ Haller, *Eugenics*, p. 7. Also Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, pp. 250-52; Gunnar Broberg and Mattias Tyden, “Eugenics in Sweden: efficient care”, p. 130, and Bent Sigurd Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark: eugenics and the ascent of the welfare state”, p. 61, both in Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the welfare state: sterilization policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996); Catrine Clay and

Daniel Kevles suggests a further division of eras for the movement. He characterises the period between the early twentieth century and the First World War as an era of “mainline” eugenics.⁶⁴ Mainline eugenics was marked by hereditary determinism, pessimism and overt racialism, and lost popular support after 1930, for a number of reasons.⁶⁵ According to Kevles and those who adhere to his arguments, the inter-war period marked a departure from prewar eugenics, when “reform” eugenics became popular. This type of eugenics was more positive, more popular with professionals, and was responsible for the development of scientific categories of the “unfit”.⁶⁶ Some recent revisionist works have argued that the traditional division is too simplistic.⁶⁷ Nicole Rafter points out that eugenic ideology influenced the development of many disciplines in the early twentieth century.⁶⁸

Michael Leapman, *Master race: the Lebensborn experiment in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), p. 181; Soloway, “The ‘perfect contraceptive’”, pp. 659-60.

⁶⁴ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 88.

⁶⁵ See also Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 250. Allen cites criticism from geneticists and anthropologists, public backlash against blatant racism, connection with Nazi race hygiene, and changing social and economic forces as reasons for the decline of mainline eugenics (he uses the term “old-style”) in north America.

⁶⁶ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 173-76.

⁶⁷ Hasian points out that there was interest in racial quality, the regulation of marriage, and the reproduction of supposedly defective classes before the rise of eugenics, and that many social campaigns that had a longer life than the movement itself (including birth control, temperance, scouting, intelligence testing, conservation, immigration restriction, and war preparation) had eugenic links (Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 5).

⁶⁸ Nicole Hahn Rafter, “Introduction”, in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p. 30.

1900 has been chosen as the starting point for this study because although there was some interest in eugenic ideas prior to 1900, it was only after this date that the concept became the subject of widespread debate. Due to the focus of the thesis on the language of eugenics and the way it was represented in public debate, the period of examination begins after the concept of eugenics was popularised. Another event that this thesis identifies as significant to an examination of eugenic ideas and which occurred at the beginning of the century was the formulation of the legislation that provided the basis for the "White Australia" policy. Andrew Markus argues that the development of this policy was consistent with the growth of a bureaucratic state and the consequent centralisation of power, both of which were central to the rise in popularity of eugenic philosophy.⁶⁹ The elements of this policy targeted a number of areas relating to racial fitness and purity, and encompassed ideas about improving the white race as well as excluding other races.⁷⁰

Research conducted for this thesis has found that in Queensland, ideas about racial fitness prior to 1914 displayed a mixture of environmental and hereditarian beliefs. It is argued that in public discourse in Queensland, World War I led to an increased emphasis on ideas about heredity and racial fitness. It is important to note that it is misleading to suggest that specific periods were solely characterised by one prevailing

⁶⁹ Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 110.

⁷⁰ Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 6; Grimshaw, "Federation as a turning point in Australian history", p. 26; Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 110.

trend. Several historians have pointed out that such generalisations impede a clear understanding of historical events, and that an examination of interactions between ideological positions is essential.⁷¹ Nevertheless, it is possible to point out that certain ideas were more apparent at particular times than at others.

This study has found that, in Queensland after 1930, there was renewed discussion of ideas about racial fitness, but that this had diminished by 1945. Extending the period under review until 1950 has enabled the thesis to provide some comparison with ideas about racial fitness before and after this point. It is argued that ideas about racial fitness were still present in debate after 1945, but that the language and direction of these ideas had significantly altered. Rather than focusing on potential degeneration, or the idea that some people were doomed by their heredity, these ideas now focused on the benefits to the nation of individual physical and mental fitness.⁷² Nevertheless, they retained the influence of eugenic thought, and for this reason the study reviews ideas about eugenics and racial fitness in Queensland until 1950.

⁷¹ Caroline Daley, "The strongman of eugenics, Eugen Sandow", *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 120 (2002), pp. 235-36; Stephen Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies: re-considering eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940", *Australian Historical Studies*, 103 (1994), pp. 165-67; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", pp. 320-23.

⁷² Elazar Barkan states that a critique of scientific racism at this time was part of a larger shift towards a synthesis between environmental and hereditarian theories of behaviour (*The retreat of scientific racism: changing concepts of race in Britain and the United States between the world wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 260). Steen argues that environmentalism became "fashionable" after World War II, as a reaction to the horrors of the Holocaust (*DNA and destiny*, pp. 44-5).

Historiographical context

The historiography of the eugenics movement worldwide is extensive.⁷³ By the early 1900s, eugenics movements had developed throughout Europe and North America, with eugenic ideology manifesting in a variety of ways.⁷⁴ The most extreme example was, of course, Nazi Germany, and for this reason, historians have explored the race hygiene and eugenics movements in Nazi Germany particularly thoroughly.⁷⁵ These historians argue that during the 1930s in Germany, there was a shift in perception about health and illness; both were taken out of the realm of individual choice, and therapy was administered in the interests of race and society rather than the individual.⁷⁶ It should be noted that although the eugenics movement did not gain widespread support in Germany until after the economic disaster of 1929, there was significant

⁷³ Broberg and Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the welfare state*; Cleminson, *Anarchism, science and sex*; Ian R. Dowbiggin, *Inheriting madness: professionalization and psychiatric knowledge in nineteenth-century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Schneider, *Quality and quantity*.

⁷⁴ There was significant support for eugenic ideas in Canada as well as the United States. See Ian Dowbiggin, "‘Keeping this young country sane’: C. K. Clarke, immigration restriction, and Canadian psychiatry, 1890-1925", *Canadian Historical Review*, 76 (December 1995), pp. 598-627; Angus McLaren, "The creation of a haven for ‘human thoroughbreds’: the sterilization of the feeble-minded and the mentally ill in British Columbia", *Canadian Historical Review*, 67, 2 (1986), pp. 127-50. For European movements see Gunnar Broberg, "Scandinavia: an introduction", in Broberg and Roll-Hansen, *Eugenics and the welfare state*, pp. 1-8; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 63; Kühl, *The Nazi connection*, p. 109; Schneider, *Quality and quantity*, pp. 2-3. There was also support for eugenics outside Europe and North America (Dikötter, "Race culture", p. 472).

⁷⁵ Aly, Chroust and Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland*; Michael Burleigh, *Ethics and extermination: reflections on Nazi genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Geoffrey Cocks, "Repressing, remembering, working through: German psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis and the ‘missed resistance’ in the Third Reich", *Journal of Modern History* [supplement], 64 (1992); Doris Kaufmann, "Science as cultural practice: psychiatry in the First World War and Weimar Germany", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34, 1 (1999), pp. 125-44; Kühl, *The Nazi connection*; Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁷⁶ Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, p. 518.

adherence to eugenic ideas, particularly among the psychiatric profession, well before the National Socialist government came to power in 1933.⁷⁷ It was not, however, the only country to legislate for the compulsory sterilisation of certain sections of its citizens.⁷⁸

The international eugenics movements that most directly influenced ideas about eugenics and racial fitness in Australia were British and American. Thus it is these movements that have been examined in the greatest depth in the construction of this study.⁷⁹ In Britain, where the movement originated, questions about social class dominated debates on eugenics.⁸⁰ The Eugenics Education Society, formed in 1907, and renamed the Eugenics Society in 1926, was the primary representative of the British eugenics movement.⁸¹ This organisation attracted an influential membership, but it was less successful at translating eugenic theories into legislation. One of the only British acts that encompassed eugenic ideas was the *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1913. The Eugenics

⁷⁷ Aly, Chroust and Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland*, pp. 1-3.

⁷⁸ Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland all introduced repressive legislation for the sterilisation of mental defectives (Broberg and Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the welfare state*, pp. 38-40, 77, 169-70, 195).

⁷⁹ D. P. Crook has explored the impact of Social Darwinist ideas on British history, and the relationship between these ideas and eugenics: *Darwinism, war and history: the debate over the biology of war from the "Origin of Species" to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); "War as genetic disaster?: the First World War debate over the eugenics of warfare", *War and Society*, 8, 1 (1990), pp. 47-70; "Nature's pruning hook?: war and evolution, 1890-1918: a response to Nancy Stepan", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 33, 3 (1987), pp. 237-52.

⁸⁰ Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 2; Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, p. 125. The class bias of the British eugenics movement was apparent, for example, in Galton's statement that "The aim of Eugenics is to represent each class or sect by its best specimens" ("Eugenics", p. 36).

⁸¹ Papers of the Eugenics Society, SA/EUG, Box 48, E2-5, Wellcome Institute Archives.

Education Society promoted this act, particularly certain clauses that reflected eugenic beliefs about the inheritance of mental “deficiency”.⁸² It was not, however, a specifically eugenic piece of legislation. In fact, the strong objection of some parliamentarians to particularly eugenic clauses at the draft stage led to their removal from the final act.⁸³

Both David Barker and Edward Larson have argued that British eugenicists mixed scientific and social concerns, and that this was ultimately to the detriment of the British movement. Barker claims that because British eugenicists based their arguments on “common sense” rather than science, they were unable to claim sufficient scientific authority to overcome religious and liberal opposition to their proposals, and were defeated on moral grounds.⁸⁴ Larson has followed Barker’s argument, stating that proponents of eugenic clauses in the Mental Deficiency Bill in Britain “never effectively grounded their arguments on pure science.”⁸⁵ Larson contrasts this with the American movement, which he argues was more scientifically based, and more successful in terms of legislative outcomes, than the British.

⁸² “The coming session: Government’s programme”, *The Times* (London), 12 February 1912, p. 8.

⁸³ *The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12; “Care of the feeble-minded: government modifications”, *The Times* (London), 1 November 1912, p. 5; Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics”, pp. 54-5.

⁸⁴ David Barker, “How to curb the fertility of the unfit: the feeble-minded in Edwardian Britain”, *Oxford Review of Education*, 9 (1983), p. 198.

⁸⁵ Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics”, pp. 46, 54.

One of the earliest and most influential works on the American movement was Haller's *Eugenics: hereditarian attitudes in American thought*.⁸⁶ Haller's study was a comprehensive overview of the movement, although, like most of the earliest works, he argued that eugenics was not an influential force after 1930.⁸⁷ Since Haller's pioneering endeavours, work on the American movement has been wide ranging.⁸⁸ American eugenicists, like their British counterparts, believed that degeneracy was more likely to occur in the poorer section of society, and that the people in this section were significantly more fertile than those who were affluent.⁸⁹ They differed in the groups they identified as the main source of this imbalance, reflecting the contrasting composition of British and American society. Class was a relatively minor issue in American eugenics organisations, which instead targeted poor racial minorities, particularly immigrants.⁹⁰ Restrictive immigration legislation in the US was influenced, at least in part, by eugenic concerns.⁹¹ The American movement proved more successful at promoting sterilisation as a solution to the perceived problem of mental "deficiency" than its British

⁸⁶ Haller, *Eugenics: hereditarian attitudes in American thought* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1963).

⁸⁷ See also Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, for an early history of the American movement. Pickens argued that the movement declined after 1929 (p. 5).

⁸⁸ See most notably Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, but also Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", pp. 225-64; Kühl, *The Nazi connection*; Rafter, *White trash*. For Canada, see Dowbiggin, "Keeping this young country sane", pp. 598-627, and McLaren, "The creation of a haven for 'human thoroughbreds'", pp. 127-50.

⁸⁹ McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", p. 18.

⁹⁰ Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 4; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 88. Rafter has dissented somewhat from this view, in *White trash*, pp. 7, 12.

⁹¹ Horwitz, "Always with us", p. 323. O'Brien argues that there were attempts to show that immigrants demonstrated greater rates of feeble-mindedness than native-born citizens ("Protecting the social body", p. 192).

counterpart. Between 1900 and 1950, several US states passed eugenically-based legislation for the sterilisation of mentally “defective” people.⁹² In Canada in the early 1930s, the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia passed legislation that allowed for the sterilisation of both mental “defectives” and the mentally ill.⁹³ Angus McLaren argues that this legislation was indicative of pervasive racial concerns in inter-war Canadian society, as well as increasing demands on children.⁹⁴

Historians generally ignored or neglected the history of eugenics in Australia until the 1980s. Even as late as 1986, Mary Cawte could justifiably state that the “history of eugenics in Australia largely remains to be written.”⁹⁵ Watts contends that this historiographical lacuna can be attributed to the reluctance of Australian historians to acknowledge the presence of a eugenics movement in Australia in view of the scientific discrediting of eugenic ideas, and the association of eugenics with Nazi Germany.⁹⁶ He further suggests the possibility that Australian historians were not comfortable with a “history of ideas”.⁹⁷ Since the 1980s, however, several historical and sociological studies of the eugenics movement in Australia have been written. Despite these contributions, there are still gaps in the historiography of eugenics in this country.

⁹² Joel Braslow, *Mental ills and bodily cures: psychiatric treatment in the first half of the twentieth century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 54.

⁹³ McLaren, “The creation of a haven for ‘Human Thoroughbreds’”, p. 129.

⁹⁴ McLaren, “The creation of a haven for ‘Human Thoroughbreds’”, pp. 129, 131.

⁹⁵ Mary Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency”, *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), p. 35.

⁹⁶ Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, pp. 319-20.

⁹⁷ Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, pp. 319-20.

Much of the existing work focuses on the southern states, particularly New South Wales and Victoria,⁹⁸ with minor studies of eugenics movements in most other states.⁹⁹ The incidence of eugenic thought in Queensland, however, has not yet been examined in any detail. Several articles on the wider Australian eugenics movement have focused on attempts to pass specific pieces of legislation.¹⁰⁰ Other articles and books concentrate upon particular areas of professional expertise, notably medical and educational.¹⁰¹ Watts's article represents a rare attempt to provide both an overview of eugenics in Australia, as well as a historiographical review of the movement.¹⁰²

Diana Wyndham's 1996 doctoral thesis, *Striving for national fitness: eugenics in Australia 1910s to 1930s*, is the first comprehensive study of the national eugenics movement.¹⁰³ The broad focus of her thesis, however, has led Wyndham to characterise the Australian eugenics

⁹⁸ Cawte focuses on the work of the Victorian eugenicist Berry. See also Carol Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 19, 75 (1980), pp. 199-212, Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", pp. 8-12, and Stephen Garton, "Sir Charles Mackellar: psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), pp. 21-34.

⁹⁹ Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry, "Vessels of progressivism?: Tasmanian state girls and eugenics, 1900-1940", *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), pp. 322-33; Moira Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding: the Mental Deficiency Bill in Western Australia, 1929", in Penelope Hetherington, ed., *Childhood and society in Western Australia*, (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988), pp. 144-60.

¹⁰⁰ Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 144-60; Ross Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots: eugenic legislation in Victoria, 1918-1939", 30, 113 (1999), pp. 319-42.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of medicine in New South Wales, 1880-1940* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1988); McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", pp. 17-33.

¹⁰² Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", pp. 320-21.

¹⁰³ Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness: eugenics in Australia, 1910s to 1930s*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1996.

movement as relatively homogenous. The failure to examine the incidence of eugenic ideas in Queensland in any detail may be due to the fact that there was less visible acceptance of the movement in the state. Indeed, the only article to specifically consider the incidence of eugenic ideas in Queensland is Nikki Henningham's "'Hats off, gentlemen, to our Australian mothers!': representations of white femininity in North Queensland in the early twentieth century".¹⁰⁴ This contribution to the literature, however, does not consider a broad acceptance of eugenic thought in Queensland, as the author concentrates upon the debate about the feasibility of the white race living and working in the tropics.

Carol Bacchi's 1980 article, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia, 1900-1914", provided a pioneering scholarly study in Australia. She argued that pre-1914 eugenics was characterised by positive reform goals, with World War I precipitating a climate of hereditary determinism.¹⁰⁵ Social problems in Australia before 1914 were not sufficiently serious to justify hereditary fatalism, and the idea that Australia's new environment provided a new chance for British colonists was reflected in the faith in nurture over nature.¹⁰⁶ This optimism continued, according to Bacchi, until just before World War I, when the perceived increase of "feeble-minded" people and the prevalence of

¹⁰⁴ Nikki Henningham "'Hats off, gentlemen, to our Australian mothers!': representations of white femininity in North Queensland in the early twentieth century", *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), pp. 311-21.

¹⁰⁵ Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia", pp. 199-200.

¹⁰⁶ Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia", pp. 199-200.

venereal diseases began to raise doubts over the extent to which environmental reforms could solve these problems.¹⁰⁷ Bacchi's assertion is supported by Cawte, who argues that World War I precipitated a loss of faith in environmental reform.¹⁰⁸ David McCallum also contends that World War I marked a significant dividing line in the history of eugenic thought in Australia.¹⁰⁹ In the 1980s, this became the dominant interpretation of most historians of the Australian eugenics movement. One important exception to this, and one of the earliest works to attempt a synthetic history of progressive thought in Australia, was Michael Roe's *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought, 1890-1960*. Roe argues that many prominent Australian figures who espoused eugenic or hereditarian ideas were also committed to environmental reform; he used the phrase "hovering" to describe the way in which one person could maintain apparently contradictory ideas.¹¹⁰

By the mid-1990s, revisionist Australian histories questioned many of Bacchi's conclusions. In 1994, Watts described Bacchi's division between nature and nurture as an "oppressive dichotomy", and Bacchi as being "wrong on several counts".¹¹¹ Watts argues that pre-1914 eugenics in

¹⁰⁷ Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia", pp. 209-11.

¹⁰⁸ Cawte, "Cranimetry and eugenics in Australia", pp. 35-6.

¹⁰⁹ McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", pp. 17-33.

¹¹⁰ Roe, in *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 1-22. Milton Lewis suggests that this was a particularly Australian characteristic (*Managing madness: psychiatry in Australia 1788-1980* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1988), p. 131), while Grant Rodwell has attributed it to Australian "pragmatism": "Professor Harvey Sutton: national hygienist as eugenicist and educator", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, 2 (1998), p. 164.

¹¹¹ Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 320.

Australia demonstrated a much greater tendency towards hereditary determinism than Bacchi was prepared to acknowledge.¹¹² Other Australian historians contend that there was a significant break between attitudes towards eugenics pre- and post- 1914, while not necessarily adopting a strict dichotomy between nature and nurture. For example, Ann Curthoys identifies the 1920s as an era when interest in sexuality, human reproduction and marriage led to increased debate about eugenics and related issues.¹¹³ Stephen Garton argues in his 1994 article "Sound minds and healthy bodies" that many of Bacchi's conclusions about the polarity between "environmental" and "hereditarian" reformers were oversimplified.¹¹⁴

Wyndham follows traditional historiography by asserting that the eugenics movement, both in Australia and internationally, was in decline by the 1930s.¹¹⁵ It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that its influence continued for considerably longer. Vigorous debates on the sterilisation of the intellectually impaired, or mental "defectives", continued in several countries, including Australia, during the 1930s.¹¹⁶ In fact, formal Australian eugenics organisations were active well into the 1950s, and continued to attract membership from individuals in

¹¹² Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 323.

¹¹³ Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control", p. 73.

¹¹⁴ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 165-67.

¹¹⁵ Diana Wyndham, "Plans for producing better babies", *History*, 54 (1997), p. 25.

¹¹⁶ Aly, Chroust and Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland*, pp. 13-17; Braslow, *Mental ills*, pp. 65-6; Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 164; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 319-42; Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 131; McLaren, "The creation of a haven for 'human thoroughbreds'", pp. 127-50.

influential positions who regularly released press statements.¹¹⁷ Considerable recent historiography has returned to Roe's approach, with historians now stressing continuity from the prewar to the interwar period in the eugenics movement in Australia. They propose that eugenicists in Australia always combined a belief in inherited characteristics with a faith in environmental reforms to counteract the bad effects of this heredity.¹¹⁸

The concerns of the British movement about the birthrate, and the racial anxieties of the American movement, were influential on Australian eugenicists. Generally, Australian organisations focused more on encouraging desirable citizens to breed than on preventing undesirable citizens from doing so.¹¹⁹ This emphasis was inevitable in view of the longstanding anxiety in this country that the birth rate was too low.¹²⁰ In 1904, the New South Wales Royal Commission on the Decline of the

¹¹⁷ Bessant, "Described, measured and labelled", p. 21. See also Debbie Ambery, "The Hopewood experiment", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 59 (1998), pp. 93-100.

¹¹⁸ In addition to many of the works cited above see Grant Rodwell "Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement: eugenics and Australian civic and school playgrounds, 1900-1920", *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 37, 2 (November 1996), pp. 131-33; this article also includes a short historiographical review. Also Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 323; Daley, "The strongman of eugenics", pp. 235-36.

¹¹⁹ Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia", pp. 199-200; Rosemary Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness' in early twentieth-century New South Wales", in Jane Long, Jan Gothard and Helen Brash, eds, *Forging identities: bodies, gender and feminist history* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1997), p. 214; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", pp. 328-29; Wyndham, "Plans for producing better babies", p. 25.

¹²⁰ Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control", p. 79; Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 8; Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia Volume 4: The succeeding age: 1901-1942* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press), pp. 34-5. See also John Bostock and L. Jarvis Nye, *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's national decline* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934), p. 1.

Birthrate and Mortality found that the chief reason for the decline was the increased use of contraceptives by the middle classes, mirroring the class based arguments of the British movement.¹²¹ For the most part, however, class differences, and an emphasis on the differential birth rate, were of less importance in early twentieth century Australia than they were in Britain. Australian commentators were more immediately concerned with the quantity of the Australian population than with its “quality”.

Several surveys of Queensland history were essential in the preparation of this thesis. Raymond Evans’ work on attitudes towards those who deviated from societal norms in Queensland during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was pivotal in formulating the argument of this dissertation that nineteenth century attitudes towards these groups of people had a great deal in common with eugenic philosophy.¹²² More general works on Queensland history were also utilised.¹²³ These works

¹²¹ Bacchi, “The nature-nurture debate in Australia”, p. 201.

¹²² Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government to 1919*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1970; “Keep white the strain”, pp. 1-23; “The hidden colonists”, pp. 74-100. See also W. Ross Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988), pp. 457-58.

¹²³ G. C. Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of north Queensland to 1920* ([Canberra]: Australian National University Press, 1970); David Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, 1900 to 1930*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1999; Craig Campbell, “Liberalism in Australian history, 1880-1920”, in Roe, *Social policy in Australia*, pp. 1-23; Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Ross Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), and *From 1915 to the early 1980s: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984); Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989); W. Ross Johnston, *The call of the land: a history of Queensland to the present day* (Brisbane: The Jacaranda Press, 1982); D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes,

provided information on the social, cultural and political context of Queensland society during the period under review. Studies of the history of journalism in Australia were also helpful in the construction of this thesis, in providing a context for the examination of newspaper sources that forms a significant part of the research done for this study.¹²⁴ General histories of the international and Australian eugenics movement, and general histories of Queensland, were supplemented by more specific historical and sociological studies of areas of interest identified by this investigation.

A close relationship existed between the eugenics movement and the medical profession. Various works on eugenics and medicine, as well as general histories of the medical profession in Queensland were consulted, in order to explore the role of the medical profession, and more particularly the psychiatric profession, in the treatment and control of those people who suffered from either mental illness or intellectual impairment.¹²⁵ Many of these works examine the role of eugenic ideas in

eds, *Labor in power: the Labor Party and governments in Queensland 1915-1957* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980).

¹²⁴ Denis Cryle, *Disreputable profession: journalists and journalism in colonial Australia* (Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press, 1997); Denis Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland: a social and political history 1845-1875* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989); Ann Curthoys and Julianne Schultz, eds, *Journalism: print, politics and popular culture* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999); Rod Kirkpatrick, *Sworn to no master: a history of the provincial press in Queensland to 1930* (Toowoomba: Darling Downs Institute Press, 1984); R. B. Walker, *The newspaper press in New South Wales, 1803-1920* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976).

¹²⁵ General histories of psychiatry useful in providing background information include: W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter and Michael Shepherd, *The anatomy of madness: essays in the history of psychiatry*, vol. 1 and 2 (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985); Sidney Bloch, "Psychiatry: an impossible profession?", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 31, 2 (1997), pp. 172-183; Robert Castel,

psychiatric therapy in the early twentieth century, although none discuss these ideas extensively.¹²⁶ Milton Lewis's overview of Australian psychiatric history, *Managing madness: psychiatry in Australia 1788-1980*, was also extremely useful. Lewis argues that eugenic ideas were influential in the psychiatric profession in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century.¹²⁷

Stephen Garton, in *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales*, explores the close relationship between psychiatrists and the eugenics movement in New South Wales.¹²⁸ In his article "Sound minds and healthy bodies", Garton also examines the mental hygiene movement in Australia and argues that psychiatrists played an essential role in promoting this movement.¹²⁹ General studies of medicine in Queensland have also aided an understanding of the context of medical and psychiatric treatment in Queensland during the period under review.

Francoise Castel and Anne Lovell, *The psychiatric society*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); Geoffrey Cocks, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich: the Göring Institute* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1997); Dowbiggin, *Inheriting madness*; Gerald N. Grob, *The mad among us: a history of the care of America's mentally ill* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); Kaufmann, "Science as cultural practice", pp. 125-44; Mark S. Micale and Roy Porter, eds, *Discovering the history of psychiatry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Roy Porter, *A social history of madness: stories of the insane* (London: Phoenix Giants, 1987); Michael H. Stone, *Healing the mind: a history of psychiatry from antiquity to the present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997); Mary Elene Wood, *The writing on the wall: women's autobiographies and the asylum* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

¹²⁶ Works that discuss eugenics more explicitly include: Braslow, *Mental ills*; Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion: knowledge, gender and power in modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*; Shorter, *A history of psychiatry*.

¹²⁷ Lewis, *Managing madness*, pp. 129-32. See also Garton, "Freud and the psychiatrists: the Australian debate 1900 to 1940", in Brian Head and James Walter, eds, *Intellectual movements and Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 170-87, for a discussion of psychiatry and psychoanalysis in Australia.

¹²⁸ Garton *Medicine and madness*, pp. 57-9.

¹²⁹ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 163-81.

In particular, William A. Isdale's article, "The rise of psychiatry and its establishment in Queensland", and Ross Patrick's *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960* were of great use in providing information about the medical profession in Queensland.¹³⁰ These works supplied important background information on the history of mental health and psychiatry in Queensland. No scholars, however, have explored the influence of ideas of racial fitness on this area. The present study contributes substantially to original knowledge by its examination of the influence of eugenic ideas and ideas about racial fitness on attitudes and policies directed towards the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired in Queensland.

The second area in which research for this study has identified the influence of eugenic ideology is that of racial issues in Queensland between 1900 and 1950, with a particular focus on the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state. There is a substantial body of work on ideas about racial fitness as they applied to Aboriginal people in Queensland, and more generally, Australia. Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin's book, *Exclusion, exploitation and extermination: race*

¹³⁰ William A. Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry and its establishment in Queensland", *Journal of Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, 14, 12 (1992), pp. 496-504; R. L. Doherty, ed., *A medical school for Queensland* (Brisbane: Boolarong Publications, 1986); P. K. Jordan, "Health and social welfare", in Murphy, Joyce and Hughes, *Labor in power*, pp. 319-29; Roy MacLeod and Donald Denoon, eds, *Health and healing in tropical Australia and Papua New Guinea* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1991); Ross Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1987); M. John Thearle, ed., *People, places and pestilence: vignettes of Queensland's medical past* (Brisbane: Department of Child Health, University of Queensland, 1986).

relations in colonial Queensland provides an extremely thorough overview of racial ideas and policies in Queensland, including the period which is the focus of this study.¹³¹ Rosalind Kidd, in *The way we civilise: Aboriginal affairs – the untold story*, has provided a comprehensive overview of policy towards Aboriginal people in Queensland that was essential in the preparation of this thesis.¹³² Several other works were also consulted for this study, and provided a background to issues of race in Queensland between 1900 and 1950.¹³³ Very few works on race relations between various non-white, non-Aboriginal races and the white race have focused on the influence of eugenics. David Walker's *Anxious nation* discusses some eugenic fears, and ideas about racial purity.¹³⁴ Evans has stated that fears about non-white races, and particularly the Chinese, displayed both eugenic and hygienic fears.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland: a history of exclusion, exploitation and extermination* 3rd ed. (St Lucia: University of Queensland, 1993).

¹³² Kidd, *The way we civilise: Aboriginal affairs – the untold story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997).

¹³³ Thom Blake, "Deported ... At the sweet will of the government: the removal of Aborigines to reserves in Queensland 1897-1939", *Aboriginal History*, 22 (1998), pp. 51-61; Timothy Bottoms, *Djabugay country: an Aboriginal history of tropical north Queensland* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1999); Anna Haebich, *Broken circles: fragmenting indigenous families 1800-2000* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000); Rita Huggins and Jackie Huggins, *Auntie Rita* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994); Laurie, "Not a matter of taste but a healthy racial instinct"; Rowena MacDonald, *Between two worlds: the Commonwealth government and the removal of Aboriginal children of part descent in the Northern Territory: an Australian Archives exhibition* (Alice Springs: IAD Press, 1995); Henry Reynolds and Dawn May, "Queensland", in Ann McGrath, ed., *Contested ground: Australian Aborigines under the British Crown* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995), pp. 168-207; Kay Saunders, "The dark shadow of white Australia: racial anxieties in Australia in World War II", *Ethnic and racial studies*, 17, 1 (1994), pp. 325-41; William Thorpe, "Archibald Meston and Aboriginal legislation in colonial Queensland", *Historical Studies*, 21, 82 (1984), pp. 52-67.

¹³⁴ Walker, *Anxious nation: Australia and the rise of Asia 1850-1939* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), especially pp. 181-84, 191-94, 230.

¹³⁵ See Evans, "The owl and the eagle": the significance of race in colonial Queensland", p. 43, and "Night of broken glass: the anatomy of an anti-Chinese riot", p.

Raymond Evans has mentioned the influence of eugenic thought on discourse about the Aboriginal population of Queensland in several works, and these have been invaluable in the preparation of this thesis.¹³⁶ Evans does not, however, focus on these ideas as his primary point of concern. This thesis is more concerned with the nuances of the term *eugenics* as they applied to various marginalised groups in Queensland, including the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state. Russell McGregor has also examined various aspects of scientific racism, particularly as they applied to the “doomed race” theory, in *Imagined destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939*.¹³⁷ McGregor discusses eugenics as one aspect of these theories, and does not examine in detail the way in which eugenic ideas were differentiated from older ideas about Aboriginal people. Tony Austin, in “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, argues that the eugenics movement had a significant influence on attitudes towards “half-castes”.¹³⁸ Austin’s article is a valuable contribution to this debate, but it focuses solely on the Northern Territory in the 1920s, and therefore is of limited value to the present study. General works on racial

82, both in *Fighting words: writing about race* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999).

¹³⁶ See “A permanent precedent”: dispossession, social control and the Fraser Island Reserve and Mission, 1897-1904, Ngulaig, monograph 5, (St Lucia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland, 1991); *Fighting words*.

¹³⁷ Russell McGregor *Imagined destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997), pp. 44-5, 58, 161-62, 174.

¹³⁸ Tony Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, *Aboriginal History*, 14, 1-2 (1990), pp. 105, 107.

thinking internationally have also been useful.¹³⁹ Although many of these works consider eugenics as one aspect of their investigation, none provide a sustained analysis of the influence of eugenic ideology on issues of race and racial fitness in Queensland for the period under review. This thesis thus fills a gap in the historiography of this area.

Various works on education in Australia and Queensland, some discussing eugenic influence, were useful in preparing the section of this thesis that focuses on children and education.¹⁴⁰ None of the works that examine eugenic ideology in education have explored the incidence of

¹³⁹ Michael Banton, *Racial theories*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and *The idea of race*; Barkan, *The retreat of scientific racism*; Bernardi, *The birth of whiteness*; Allan Chase, *The legacy of Malthus: the social costs of the new scientific racism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); Laura Doyle, *Bordering on the body: the racial matrix of modern fiction and culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and pathology: stereotypes of sexuality, race and madness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985); James H. Jones, *Bad blood: the Tuskegee syphilis experiment*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1991); Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and prejudice: the politics and diplomacy of racial discrimination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988); Ashley Montagu, *Man's most dangerous myth: the fallacy of race*, 6th ed. (London: Altamira Press, 1997); Charles V. Willie, Bernard M. Kramer and Bertram S. Brown, eds, *Racism and mental health: essays* ([Pittsburgh]: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973).

¹⁴⁰ Hector Holthouse, *Looking back: the first 150 years of Queensland schools* (Brisbane: Department of Education, Queensland, 1975); David Kirk and Karen Twigg, "Regulating Australian bodies: eugenics, anthropometrics and school medical inspection in Victoria, 1900-1940", *History of Education Review*, 23, 1 (1994), pp. 19-37; Mary Kooyman, *Children as a resource: attitudes to childhood in nineteenth century Britain*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1999; Robert van Krieken, *Children and the state: social control and the formation of Australian child welfare* (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992); Greg Logan, *Sex education in Queensland: a history of the debate since 1900* (Brisbane: Education History Unit, Department of Education, 1991), and Logan and Eddie Clark, *State education in Queensland: a brief history* (Brisbane: Policy and Information Services Branch, Department of Education, 1984); McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", pp. 17-33; Grant Rodwell, "Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement", pp. 129-48, and "Lessons in eugenics from Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopedia*", *Education and Research Perspectives*, 24, 1 (1997), pp. 94-110; Andrew Spaull, *Australian education in the Second World War* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982); E. R. Wyeth, *Education in Queensland: a history of education in Queensland and in the Moreton Bay District of New South Wales* (Melbourne: Australian Council for Education Research, 195-).

such ideas in Queensland educational policy. For the final chapter of this study, a wide range of secondary works on ideas about the white race in Australia were consulted, particularly on the issue of white settlement in the tropical north.¹⁴¹ Works in the areas of gender and infant welfare have also been useful in conducting research for this chapter.¹⁴² Many of these works discuss eugenic associations with birth control and sex education campaigns. This chapter provides an original contribution to knowledge in this area by its overview of a variety of ideas expressed at this time about the desirable characteristics of the white race, and the correlation between these ideas and concepts of racial fitness and eugenic ideology.

Overall, this thesis makes original contributions to historical knowledge in three main areas. First, it examines ideas about eugenic ideology and

¹⁴¹ As there is considerable overlap with other areas in providing background for this chapter, many of the works used have already been cited. Others utilised include: Warwick Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness: science, health and racial destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002); Raphael Cilento and Clem Lack, *Triumph in the tropics: a historical sketch of Queensland* (Brisbane: Smith and Paterson, 1959); Henningham "Representations of white femininity in north Queensland", pp. 311-21; *Lectures on north Queensland history: second series* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1975).

¹⁴² Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women", pp. 132-56; Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control", pp. 73-89; Damousi, "Modernism, Socialism and Communism", pp. 34-9; Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, gender and social change in Britain since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000); Sharyn Pearce, "The best career is matrimony: first-wave journalism and the Australian Girl", *Hecate*, 18, 2 (1992), pp. 64-78; Reiger, *The disenchantment of the home*; George Robb, "Eugenics, spirituality and sex differentiation in Edwardian England: the case of Frances Swiney", *Journal of Women's History*, 10, 3 (1998), pp. 97-117; Kay Saunders, and Raymond Evans, eds, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992); Judith Smart, "Feminists, flappers and Miss Australia: contesting the meanings of citizenship, femininity and nation in the 1920s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 71 (2001), pp. 1-15; Soloway, "The 'perfect contraceptive'", pp. 637-64; Virginia Thorley, *Feeding their babies: infant feeding advice received by Queensland women in the postwar period, 1945-1965*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 2000.

racial fitness in Queensland, and thus fills a gap in the history of the eugenics movement in Australia. Secondly, by its emphasis on language and ideas, in addition to legislative action, it contributes to a discussion about international eugenic discourse that few Australian historians have explicitly addressed. Finally, its examination of a range of related ideas, occurring in several areas of public and professional discourse in Queensland, provides a new perspective on the history of the four areas specified of particular interest to eugenic philosophy. These are the history of the mentally ill and intellectually impaired; the history of race relations; the history of education; and histories of the various issues associated with the “white race” in Queensland, including gender and immigration.

Theoretical perspectives

This thesis utilises various works of theory to provide a framework for its central argument that eugenic discourse was influential in Queensland public and government debate between 1900 and 1950. Ideas about several disparate groups in Queensland society are examined. Therefore, no single theoretical approach has been adopted. A unifying theme throughout this thesis, however, is the way that power was wielded against vulnerable groups within Queensland society. For this reason, theoretical works that discuss power in social relationships have been extremely useful. The thesis is, essentially, an examination of the discourse of elite groups about marginalised groups. The focus of the

investigation is on debates about disadvantaged, vulnerable or politically powerless groups.¹⁴³ A theoretical framework that discusses the nature of power and repression is therefore essential. The thesis is also concerned with the way in which language is used to express ideas, and thus an examination of works on discourse and rhetoric has been helpful. Theories on the classification and diagnosis of mental illness were also utilised.

Max Weber defined power as the “opportunity existing within a social relationship which permits one to carry out one’s will even against resistance and regardless of the basis on which this opportunity rests”.¹⁴⁴ This concept of power, however, is sociologically amorphous. For this reason, Weber stated that the concept of domination must be more precise. This is defined as the “opportunity to have a command of a given specified content obeyed by a given group of persons.”¹⁴⁵ This thesis does not use strictly sociological concepts of power and domination, but these basic definitions were extremely useful as a foundation.¹⁴⁶ Michel Foucault’s various works on the theory of power and repression were used to build on these concepts.¹⁴⁷ His discussion,

¹⁴³ Chapter Six largely focuses on disadvantaged or marginalised groups within mainstream society, such as women and immigrants.

¹⁴⁴ Max Weber, *Basic concepts in sociology*, tr. H. P. Secher (London: Peter Owen, 1962), p. 117.

¹⁴⁵ Weber, *Basic concepts in sociology*, p. 117.

¹⁴⁶ See also J. E. T. Eldridge, ed., *Max Weber: the interpretation of social reality* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971).

¹⁴⁷ Particularly useful were *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, tr. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) and the collection of writings edited by

in the *History of sexuality Volume I*, of the emergence of “population” as an “economic and political problem” in the eighteenth century is relevant to an examination of eugenics.¹⁴⁸ Eugenic ideas focused on ways to improve, and therefore control, the population. Foucault described this emergence of “population” as a great innovation “in the techniques of power” at this time, further stating that governments now realised “that they were not dealing simply with subjects, ... but with a ‘population’, with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables”, such as birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation.¹⁴⁹ These issues continued to be widely discussed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and almost all of them came to be central to eugenic discourse in the early twentieth century.

Of further relevance to a discussion of eugenic ideas is Foucault’s argument that sex was at the heart of the economic and political problem of population during the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁰ Sex was also predominant in eugenic discussions, as they focused on controlling reproduction. Foucault’s contention was that the emergence of “population” as a problematic category was responsible for the beginning of large-scale analysis of birthrates, legitimate and illegitimate births,

James D. Faubion, *Power*, vol. 3, tr. Robert Hurley *et al.* (New York: The New Press, 1994), in Paul Rabinow, ed., *Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984* series.

¹⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality Volume I: an introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 25.

¹⁴⁹ Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁰ Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, pp. 25-6.

frequency of sexual relations, effects of unmarried life, and the impact of contraceptive devices on the population, among other problems.¹⁵¹ Whether or not this is historically correct, the identification of a “population” as a group that could be controlled is essential to an understanding of the power of eugenic ideas. Foucault stated that with the development of “population” as a category came a move to “a discourse in which the sexual conduct of the population was taken both as an object of analysis and a target of intervention.”¹⁵² Sex became a public issue, as the state tried to “transform the sexual conduct of couples into a concerted economic and political behaviour.”¹⁵³ Eugenics must be seen in the context of attempts to control the sexuality of a population, and to use it to benefit the state.

Sociological theories on the functioning of society have also been useful in understanding “population” as a technique of power, and thus expanding on Foucault’s theory.¹⁵⁴ Bodies can be considered both individually and as populations.¹⁵⁵ In order to survive, populations have to be reproduced over time, but they also have to be regulated in space. Reproduction of populations entails the social control of fertility.¹⁵⁶ The same concerns about social control and continuity manifest at an

¹⁵¹ Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁵² Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, p. 26.

¹⁵³ Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, p. 26.

¹⁵⁴ It is important to remember throughout this discussion Foucault’s contention that the exercise of power is a complex phenomenon that is not solely repressive, but contains equally productive elements (in *The Foucault reader*, pp. 170-72).

¹⁵⁵ Ruth A. Wallace and Alison Wolf, *Contemporary sociological theory: expanding the classical tradition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), p. 376.

¹⁵⁶ Wallace and Wolf, *Contemporary sociological theory*, p. 377.

individual level with attempts to make individuals restrain their sexuality for public order.¹⁵⁷ These theories have been useful in discussing eugenic ideas, which were focused on the control of fertility and reproduction at the level of both state and individual. Eugenic ideas thus fit into a larger framework of power and repression of both individuals and groups as part of a population that had to be controlled. Foucault's theories, combined with the general sociological principles outlined above on the ways in which power and repression are employed to control populations, provide a foundation for the central argument of this thesis. They also inform a discussion of the use of classification and segregation as tools of power and repression directed towards groups defined by decision makers as "problematic" in a specific population.

The impulse to categorise was one of the features of many forms of scientific writing during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁵⁸ Jan Goldstein argues in *Console and classify* that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "investigators claiming scientific status and authority began to fasten their attention on the ordinary activities and the internal processes of human beings."¹⁵⁹ She describes classification as "the act of scientific naming, as a technique for the enhancement of

¹⁵⁷ Wallace and Wolf, *Contemporary sociological theory*, p. 378. Feminism has led to renewed sociological interest in the body; awareness of gender of subjects returns awareness to them as "bodily creatures" (p. 380).

¹⁵⁸ Although this phenomenon became more apparent at this time, it was influenced by Carol von Linnaeus's creation, during the eighteenth century, of a universal taxonomy of the natural world (Banton, *Racial theories*, p. 19; Lauren, *Power and prejudice*, p. 21).

¹⁵⁹ Jan Goldstein, *Console and classify: the French psychiatric profession in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 1.

professional power”, arguing for its development from an eighteenth century interest in elaborating “universal taxonomies of disease”.¹⁶⁰ Classification was used as means of gaining power over certain groups.¹⁶¹ An interest in the classification of particular groups was apparent in Queensland society during the period under review in this thesis. People with a mental illness, and those with an intellectual impairment, were divided into categories based on their perceived abilities and possibility of recovery. There was an almost obsessive interest in classifying and categorising the racial mix of Aboriginal people in Queensland. This interest was also seen, although to a lesser degree, in discussion of the racial background of immigrants to the state. School children were also the subject of classification, particularly those who showed difficulty learning. Classification was not used in isolation, but was often combined with segregation.¹⁶²

Segregation was used as an instrument of power against particular groups, particularly from the late eighteenth century, when those in authority began to identify various groups as “problem” populations.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Goldstein, *Console and classify*, pp. 321, 324.

¹⁶¹ Goldstein states that the “power to classify, claimed by and granted to the psychiatrist, is one of the most basic, indeed primordial of social powers.” (*Console and classify*, p. 383).

¹⁶² Stanley Cohen, *Visions of social control: crime, punishment and classification* (New York: Polity Press, 1985), p. 13; Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial justice: women, prisons and social control* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), p. 29.

¹⁶³ Foucault argued that this phenomenon occurred to a greater degree than ever before during the eighteenth century. See for example *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 166-68; *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 43-51; *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 24-8. See also Cohen, *Visions of social control*, pp. 13, 225-26; ; M. A. Crowther, “The later years of the workhouse 1890-1929”, in Pat Thane, ed. *The origins*

At this time, surveys of statistical data were used to make moral judgments about the behaviour of certain sections of the population, with the result that many commentators argued that there was a link between moral “degeneracy” and certain types of behaviour, including but not limited to, criminal activity.¹⁶⁴ This perceived link motivated many reformers to demand the removal of children from “corrupting” situations, and reform schools supported by the government were established for this purpose.¹⁶⁵ Rosalind Kidd contends that although parental consent was usually sought, some classes of children “could be classified as delinquent *because of their problematic status*” and compulsorily removed.¹⁶⁶ Thus, certain “problem” populations were identified as criminal simply because of the circumstances into which they were born.¹⁶⁷

of British social policy (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 36-55, especially pp. 36-8, 42-3; Evans, “A permanent precedent”, pp. 14-17; Lynette Finch, *The classing gaze: sexuality, class and surveillance* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993); Mark Finnane, *Police and government: histories of policing in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 75, and *Colonisation and incarceration: the criminal justice system and Aboriginal Australians* (London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1997); Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy*, pp. 177-78.

¹⁶⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, pp. 251-55, and in *The Foucault reader*, p. 150; Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy*, pp. 139-48; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, pp. 9-21.

¹⁶⁵ Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or rebels?: an oral history of working-class childhood and youth 1889-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), pp. 209-39. See also Rafter, *Partial justice*, pp. 23-41, on the development of women’s reformatories in America.

¹⁶⁶ Kidd states that these classes included “paupers, mendicants, vagabonds, foundlings, and deserted children”, also those considered to be in “vicious or moral danger” (Kidd, *The way we civilise*, pp. 17-19).

¹⁶⁷ Margaret Barbalet, *Far from a low gutter girl: the forgotten world of state wards, South Australia, 1887-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983); Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds, *Resistance through rituals: youth sub-cultures in post-war Britain* (Birmingham: HarperCollins Academic, 1976); Jose Harris, *Private lives, public spirit: a social history of Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1993).

Mark Finnane's research demonstrates how the argument that some people were doomed by their heredity to be unable to function normally in society, and should thus be segregated in order to prevent their reproduction, was common in eugenic propaganda at this time.¹⁶⁸ This argument provided a rationale for the institutionalisation of certain groups of people.¹⁶⁹ Raymond Evans argues that fear of racial degeneration, a fear informed by eugenic ideas, was prevalent in Western societies at the turn of the century.¹⁷⁰ Policies directed towards groups defined as "degenerate sub-types" usually involved segregation, and were more concerned with controlling deviancy than with philanthropy.¹⁷¹ Theory on the use of classification and segregation as tools of power to control "problem" populations informs this study in its entirety. This dissertation contends that it is essential to bear in mind the unequal power relationships between those who classified, and those who were the subjects of this classification.

Another major component of this thesis is the use of language and rhetoric in expressing eugenic ideas and ideas about racial fitness. Thus, theories of rhetoric and discourse have been essential in constructing an

¹⁶⁸ Mark Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 65.

¹⁶⁹ Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 99. Finnane argues that psychology was more influential than eugenics in promoting this agenda. See also Stephen Garton, "Bad or mad?: developments in incarceration in New South Wales 1880-1920", in Sydney Labour History Group, *What rough beast?*, p. 110.

¹⁷⁰ Evans, *Fighting words*, p. 117.

¹⁷¹ Evans, *Fighting words*, pp. 117-18.

argument.¹⁷² The thesis does not, however, adopt any particular linguistic approach. Once again, Foucault's work was utilised, particularly his contention that:

There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say ... There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.¹⁷³

Marouf Hasian provides one of the only explicit studies of eugenic rhetoric, adopting an ideographic approach to the rhetoric of eugenics.¹⁷⁴ This study does not employ this framework; rather it adopts similar concerns about the way in which eugenic ideas were represented in public debate.

The thesis does follow Hasian's approach in acknowledging the significance of belief in "the importance of a few highly evocative words", and their willingness to take action based on this belief.¹⁷⁵ Thus, he argues, we can begin to understand how marginalised groups could lose their reproductive rights "in the name of 'liberty', 'opportunity', or 'necessity'".¹⁷⁶ It also attempts to explain "how a movement like eugenics

¹⁷² Richard Andrews, ed., *Rebirth of rhetoric: essays in language, culture and education* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Modern rhetoric*, 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979); David Carroll, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989); David Forgacs, ed., *A Gramsci reader: selected writings 1916-1935* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988); Jacques Derrida, *Writing and difference*, tr. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), especially pp. 31-63; Michel Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*, tr. A. M. Sheridan Smith, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

¹⁷³ Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, pp. 2-8.

¹⁷⁵ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁶ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 11.

can appear to provide answers to complex social questions for a variety of different audiences.”¹⁷⁷ Hasian’s work has been useful in preparing this thesis. It must be noted, however, that his claims to a unique approach are exaggerated, and that his work lacks contextualisation.¹⁷⁸ Other historians, both in Australia and internationally, have used popular as well as “elite” sources in discussing eugenic ideas.¹⁷⁹

An important aspect of eugenic rhetoric was the way in which it dehumanised scrutinised groups. Erving Goffman’s work on stigma is relevant to a discussion of the dehumanisation of certain groups of people. Goffman discussed three different types of stigma, and it can be seen that each of these types is relevant to various groups targeted as sites of eugenic intervention. The first type is physical deformities.¹⁸⁰ The second is “blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty”.¹⁸¹ Goffman stated that a known history of various behaviours or afflictions can imply this second type of stigma, among which he includes mental disorder, alcoholism and imprisonment. The third type of stigma is “the tribal stigma or race, nation, and religion.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 10.

¹⁷⁸ Horwitz, “Always with us”, p. 326.

¹⁷⁹ See, among others, Fitzpatrick, in “Preventing the unfit from breeding”, pp. 144-60; Jones, in “The master potter and the rejected pots”, pp. 319-42; Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics”, pp. 45-60; and Rodwell in “Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement”, pp. 129-48, who all utilise newspaper sources.

¹⁸⁰ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 4.

¹⁸¹ Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 4.

¹⁸² Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 4.

In all of these instances of stigma, Goffman found the same sociological features; that is, those who do not possess stigma turn away from those who do, and the person with the stigma is, by definition, seen as “not quite human”.¹⁸³ The same could be said for the various groups that were made the target of eugenic rhetoric, or rhetoric about racial fitness.

Foucault argued that “the madman’s body was regarded as the visible and solid presence of his disease”.¹⁸⁴ This was particularly apparent in debates over the “feble-minded”. In a 1999 article entitled “Protecting the social body: use of the organism metaphor in fighting the ‘menace of the feble-minded’”, Gerald O’Brien argues that during the early twentieth century, a common metaphorical way of discussing society was to identify the social system as a biological entity, similar to the human body.¹⁸⁵ Individual humans were viewed primarily as components of this entity, and thus their value depended on the extent to which they contributed to its functioning. O’Brien calls this the “organism metaphor”, and states that a prevalent theme in this metaphor was “the contamination of the healthy segments of society by the unhealthy segments.”¹⁸⁶ The language used to describe “unfit” sections of the community, and particularly mental “defectives”, often focused on waste, degeneration, “and the eating away of that which is healthy and good.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 5. See also Charles Lemert and Ann Branaman, eds, *The Goffman reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

¹⁸⁴ Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, p. 159.

¹⁸⁵ O’Brien, “Protecting the social body”, p. 189.

¹⁸⁶ O’Brien, “Protecting the social body”, p. 189.

¹⁸⁷ O’Brien, “Protecting the social body”, p. 190.

O'Brien focuses specifically on mental "defectives", but many of his points are relevant to discussions of other groups.

Further theoretical perspectives on scientific rhetoric were also useful. Martha Solomon asserts that scientific writing is a dehumanising genre, not as a side effect, but by its very nature and objectives.¹⁸⁸ The rhetorical conventions of scientific writing as a genre mean that any focus on ethical perspectives is discouraged because it is not "scientific" or "objective".¹⁸⁹ Many scientific studies appeal to the reader's esteem for knowledge. Medical studies present the medical community as an "admirable elite".¹⁹⁰ Although this thesis does not examine scientific documents, it argues that much of the discussion of marginalised groups at this time employed "scientific" language. It is argued that the effect of the use of this language was to dehumanise those groups under discussion.

An examination of popular sources, and consideration of rhetorical theory, goes some way to redress the imbalance in the historiography of eugenics, by providing evidence about how the movement was popularly accepted. Solomon states that a text's influence can be signified by its

¹⁸⁸ Martha Solomon, "The rhetoric of dehumanization", in William L. Nothstine, Carole Blair and Gary A. Copeland, eds, *Critical questions: invention, creativity, and the criticism of discourse and media* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), p. 303.

¹⁸⁹ Solomon, "The rhetoric of dehumanization", p. 315.

¹⁹⁰ Solomon, "The rhetoric of dehumanization", p. 317-18. Although Solomon is specifically discussing the Tuskegee syphilis study, her conclusions can be applied more widely. See also Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 7, 26-30.

popularity, and by its political success.¹⁹¹ It is almost impossible to discover how those marginalised groups most targeted by eugenic and racial fitness rhetoric reacted. This thesis attempts to deal with this problem by its focus on public debate and official government correspondence. By examining the language expressed in these sources about these groups, inferences can be drawn about the treatment of the groups targeted.

Many theoretical works on the diagnosis and classification of mental illness have also been important in preparing the thesis. Theories and debates about relative influence of social construction and biology on physical characteristics and behaviour (or nature versus nurture) have consequences in everyday life, and mental illness is a good example of this.¹⁹² Influences on diagnosis and treatment of mental illness include: the question of what is acceptable behaviour; the attitudes of patients and families; psychiatric and medical theories, which are often contradictory; and the medical staff's view of their patients. Sander L. Gilman discusses the ways in which blackness was associated with illness, and particularly psychopathology, in America in the early twentieth century.¹⁹³ The idea that there was a special relationship

¹⁹¹ Solomon, "The rhetoric of dehumanization", p. 302.

¹⁹² Wallace and Wolf, *Contemporary sociological theory*, p. 374.

¹⁹³ Gilman, *Difference and pathology*, p. 132. See also Charles Prudhomme and David F. Musto, "Historical perspectives on mental health and racism in the United States", in Willie, Kramer and Brown, eds, *Racism and mental health*, pp. 37-9, who argue that when black rates of insanity were much lower than white rates, it was posited as a sign of black inferiority, but when, after emancipation, blacks began to "catch up", scientific theories were juggled to show how this too proved black inferiority.

between blackness and madness persisted well into the twentieth century in America.¹⁹⁴ Finally, this thesis has used recent studies of the portrayal of mental illness by the media.¹⁹⁵ Although these studies are contemporary, some of their conclusions have been useful in examining newspaper sources from an earlier period. This thesis has found that the reporting of mental illness in the early twentieth century reflected many similar trends to those examined in these contemporary studies.

Sources and methodological approach

This study uses a wide range of sources in order to examine public, professional and governmental responses to eugenic ideas in Queensland. Newspapers, journals, archival sources, government reports and parliamentary debates have each been examined. These sources were analysed for the incidence of ideas about racial fitness in public and government discourse at this time, and also for explicitly eugenic ideology. This contributes to the historiography of the eugenics movement in Australia, as there has not yet been an in-depth

¹⁹⁴ Gilman, *Difference and pathology*, p. 140. Gilman states that nineteenth century psychiatrists also believed that Jewish people were predisposed to mental illness due to inbreeding (pp. 154-55).

¹⁹⁵ Mike Hazelton, "Reporting mental health: a discourse analysis of mental health-related news in two Australian newspapers", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 6, 2 (1997), pp. 73-5; Greg Philo, Greg McLaughlin and Lesley Henderson, "Media content", and Greg Philo, "The media and public belief", pp. 82-104, both in Greg Philo, ed., *Media and mental distress: Glasgow Media Group* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 45-8; Otto F. Wahl, *Media madness: public images of mental illness* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995), pp. 56-86; Charles Winick, "The image of mental illness in the mass media", in Walter R. Gove, ed., *Deviance and mental illness* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), pp. 225-46. Wahl states that violent stereotyping is the most common and the most "pernicious" form of stereotyping of the mentally ill (p. 56).

examination of the incidence of eugenic ideas in Queensland discourse. Although there has been other work carried out on ideas about race and racial fitness in Queensland,¹⁹⁶ this thesis focuses on these ideas as they appeared across a range of discourses. In examining the sources and texts discussed below, the basic approach adopted incorporated aspects of both narrative and semiotic analysis, although a strict sociological methodology was not followed. The idea that society and groups can be represented through language was found useful to the construction of this study, although this approach was not adhered to strictly.¹⁹⁷

A considerable range of official government sources have proved valuable to the construction of the thesis. Annual reports from various government departments for the period under review provided essential information on governmental attitudes towards the various groups targeted by eugenic ideas and ideas about racial fitness. These departments include those responsible for policy and administration in the four areas identified by this thesis as of particular interest. For the first area, the treatment of mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults, the reports of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane have been examined from 1900 to 1938. After this time, the reorganisation of the Health and Home Affairs Department meant that this report was

¹⁹⁶ Many of the works cited above include discussion of ideas about race in various documents. Laurie, in "Not a matter of taste but a healthy racial instinct", has examined these ideas in some depth.

¹⁹⁷ Peter K. Manning and Betsy Cullum-Swan, "Narrative, content and semiotic analysis", in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds, *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 251.

subsumed into a general report for this department. For the second area, focusing on debates about race in Queensland, the reports of the Protector of Aborigines have been examined from 1900 to 1939. After this time, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was reorganized, and the reports for 1939 to 1950 have also been examined. For children and education, the reports of the Department of Public Instruction and that of the Department of State Children were analysed. For the final chapter, focusing on ideas about the “white” race, the reports of the Department of Infant Welfare and the Department of Immigration have been examined. In addition to these departments, research conducted for the thesis utilised the reports of other state departments that would possibly demonstrate the influence of ideas about racial fitness. These departments were Public Health, Police, Prisons, and Hospitals and Charitable Institutions. All these reports were part of the *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* collection.

In addition to these reports, legislation relating to the key areas discussed in this thesis was scrutinised. This legislation encompasses the *Mental Hygiene Act* of 1938, the *Backward Persons Act* of 1938, and the *Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts*, 1897 to 1934. The *Criminal Code Amendment Act* of 1914, which made provision for indeterminate sentences for so-called habitual criminals, was also examined. Finally, Queensland parliamentary debates for all the years from 1900 to 1950 were perused in order to explore the ideas

expressed in parliament at this time, particularly at times when the government was attempting to pass legislation. In addition to published government sources, this study makes use of a considerable amount of material sourced from archival repositories. This material, held at the Queensland State Archives, was taken from the official records of the various departments responsible for policy relating to the four areas considered by this thesis. No other historian has used this material in such a way. This approach revealed that, at an official level, concerns about racial fitness were taken seriously well into the 1930s. Furthermore, it indicates that these concerns were of more interest to the Queensland government after 1930. It appears that earlier governments had displayed little interest in them.

Other archival repositories provided essential material relating to professional groups and individuals. The papers of Sir Raphael Cilento, held at the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland, afforded many examples of ideas about racial fitness, particularly in relation to the development of the “white” race in the tropical north of Queensland. The papers of Dr Phyllis Cilento (Lady Cilento), also held at the Fryer Library, aided an understanding of ideas about motherhood and the birthrate in Queensland during the 1920s and 1930s. The papers of the English Eugenics Society, held at the Wellcome Institute Library in London, were extremely useful in providing background information on the international eugenics movement. The papers of J. H. L. Cumpston, held

at the National Library in Canberra, were also examined. Cumpston was a figure of great influence in the development of a public health system in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century, and was also a mentor to J. S. C. Elkington, an influential Commissioner of Public Health in Queensland between 1910 and 1913. Both Cumpston and Elkington were interested in ideas about racial fitness, and Cumpston's papers thus provided background to these ideas in elite circles in Australia at this time.

Queensland newspapers played a pivotal role in helping to ascertain the extent to which eugenic ideology and ideas about racial fitness were accepted and discussed by the Queensland public. They also provided a valuable source to discover attitudes and ideas about these topics. Much of this investigation focused on the *Queenslander*, from 1900 to 1938, when it ceased publication. There are several reasons for this. The first is that, as a state-wide newspaper, it published articles from all Queensland regions and thus could be expected to address state wide concerns rather than simply those of the south east corner.¹⁹⁸ The *Queenslander* was a weekly synopsis of the *Brisbane Courier*, and its expansion during the late nineteenth century came at the expense of the *Courier's* circulation.¹⁹⁹ On the other hand, because it was published in Brisbane, it avoided much of the parochialism of regional papers, which

¹⁹⁸ Indeed, the *Queenslander* was initially aimed primarily at provincial readers (Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland*, p. 102).

¹⁹⁹ Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland*, p. 102.

tended to focus on local and immediate concerns.²⁰⁰ Although many provincial newspapers were established in Queensland immediately after federation, by 1920 their numbers had reached a plateau, and were decreasing by the late 1920s.²⁰¹ Therefore, there were few of these newspapers that were published for the majority of the period considered in this investigation.

In order to supplement the information found in the *Queenslander*, the thesis utilises other Brisbane newspapers, including the *Week*, the *Brisbane Courier*, and the *Courier Mail*, particularly after 1938, when the *Queenslander* ceased publication. Some regional newspapers were also examined. Research was focused on dates when there was an expectation of increased interest in eugenic or racial fitness concerns in Queensland. These dates were determined by using secondary sources to identify periods when there was increased national or international interest in eugenic ideas. This method yielded some surprising results. For example, in years of increased international interest in eugenic concerns, there was generally increased interest in such concerns in Queensland newspapers. This interest, however, did not always take the form of a discussion of overseas events, but was often indicated by opinion pieces or reports on events in Queensland. For purposes of comparison, although that is not a major aim of this thesis, some issues

²⁰⁰ Kirkpatrick, *Sworn to no master*, p. 7.

²⁰¹ Kirkpatrick, *Sworn to no master*, pp. 290, 300, 312.

of the major daily newspapers of New South Wales and Victoria were examined, along with some issues of the London newspaper *The Times*.

Although many historians of eugenics in other states have used newspapers as part of their analysis,²⁰² no historian has used Queensland newspapers as a basis for exploring eugenic ideas, and their relation to ideas about racial fitness, in the state, or even as a comparison with southern newspapers. Research into these sources indicates that eugenic ideas were present in Queensland for the period under review. This does not mean, however, that these ideas were accepted without question. Many of the articles published in these newspapers on topics relating to eugenics were merely reports of overseas activities, or reports of statements made by a public figure. The publication of such articles is significant in itself. The presence of some editorial comment on eugenic topics indicates that eugenic ideas were at least in circulation in Queensland during the first half of the twentieth century.

As well as these popular newspapers, the thesis utilises more specialist journals. These include *The Forerunner* and *The Modernist*, journals of the Queensland Modernist Association, edited and largely written by Douglas Price. These journals, published in Brisbane during the early

²⁰² See Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 144-60; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 319-42; and Rodwell "Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement", pp. 129-48.

1910s show that in some circles, eugenics was a popular concept before 1914. Professional journals which have been instrumental in the construction of this thesis include the Queensland *Education Office Gazette*. The *Economic Record*, although it was not a Queensland publication, was also helpful in conducting research for this study. This journal carried various articles on eugenic topics, including, in the late 1920s, a debate on the potentially degenerating effects of a tropical climate on white races, focusing on North Queensland.

Various books and monographs were also examined in conducting research for this study. These included international works on eugenics, which provided contextual information about the international expression of eugenic ideas.²⁰³ These works aided a discussion of parallels between ideas expressed by avowed eugenicists internationally, and ideas expressed in Queensland public and government discourse between 1900 and 1950. Published books by certain key figures in Queensland society at this time were essential in preparing this thesis, as they illustrate further the views on racial fitness expressed by these

²⁰³ Leonard Darwin, *What is eugenics?* (London: Watts, 1928) and *The need for eugenic reform* (London: John Murray, 1926); Davenport, *Heredity in relation to eugenics*; Havelock Ellis, *The problem of race-regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911); Anna Wendt Finlayson, *The Dack family: a study in hereditary lack of emotional control* (Cold Spring Harbor, New York: Eugenics Record Office Bulletin no. 15, 1916); Galton, *Inquiries into human faculty and its development* and *Essays in eugenics*; Gates, *Heredity and eugenics*; Duncan McKim, *Heredity and human progress* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900); Paul Popenoe, and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918); Robert Reid Rentoul, *Race culture; or, race suicide?: a plea for the unborn* (London: Walter Scott Publishing, 1906); Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture* and *The methods of race-regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911); Mary Scharlieb, *Womanhood and race regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1912); Edgar Schuster, *Eugenics* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1912).

people. These works include those by Randolph Bedford,²⁰⁴ J. W. Bleakley,²⁰⁵ Phyllis Cilento,²⁰⁶ Raphael Cilento,²⁰⁷ J. S. C. Elkington²⁰⁸ and Douglas Price.²⁰⁹ The 1934 work by John Bostock and L. Jarvis Nye, *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's decline*, was also used.²¹⁰ This work has been examined in previous studies, but it was relevant to this thesis due to the background of the two authors, both influential Brisbane physicians.

Research conducted for this study has followed the argument that the expression of language in written form allows meanings to be controlled more effectively, and that language has an important role to play in the legitimisation of power.²¹¹ It also follows the assumption made in interpreting documents that belief, idea and intention are important to

²⁰⁴ Randolph Bedford, *Naught to thirty-three* (Sydney: Currawong Publishing Company, 1944) and *Explorations in civilization* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 191-).

²⁰⁵ J. W. Bleakley, *The Aborigines of Australia: their history, their habits, their assimilation* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1961) and *The half-caste Aborigines of North and Central Australia: suggestions towards solving the problem* (Sydney: Association for the Protection of Native Races, 1931).

²⁰⁶ Phyllis Cilento, *Plan your family: practical birth control* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1965) and *Enjoy your family: a guide for parenthood* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1964).

²⁰⁷ Raphael Cilento and Clem Lack, *Triumph in the tropics: an historical sketch of Queensland* (Brisbane: Smith and Patterson, 1959); Cilento, *Medicine in Queensland: a monograph* (Brisbane: Smith and Patterson, 1963); *The white man in the tropics: with especial reference to Australia and its dependencies* (Melbourne: H. J. Green, Government Printer, 1925); *Climatic conditions in North Queensland as they affect the health and virility of the people* (Brisbane: A. J. Cumming, Government Printer, 1923).

²⁰⁸ J. S. C. Elkington, *Health in the school, or Hygiene for teachers* (London (Queensland ed.): Blackie and Son, 1907).

²⁰⁹ Douglas Price, *One of a crowd: the story of a Queensland girl, drawn mainly from life* (London: Holden and Hardingham, 191-).

²¹⁰ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's decline* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934).

²¹¹ Ian Hodder, "The interpretation of documents and material culture", in Denzin and Lincoln, *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*, p. 112.

action and practice.²¹² Thus, although ideas about eugenics did not receive widespread support in Queensland at this time, and were not translated into legislation, it is the position of this thesis that the fact that these ideas were expressed by certain people in public and government discourse in Queensland at this time provides significant information about both Queensland as a society and also contributes to a broader understanding of the eugenics movement as an international phenomenon.

Chapter outline

In order to consider the incidence of eugenic ideas in Queensland between 1900 and 1950, the thesis adopts the following chapter structure. Chapter One examines the incidence of general ideas about eugenics and racial fitness in Queensland between 1900 and 1950, in the context of the economic, political and social situation in Queensland during this period. It argues that there were many factors in the socio-economic and political composition of Queensland society during this period that would suggest that the eugenics movement would not be popularly accepted in the state. That this was the case is seen by the lack of a formal eugenics movement in Queensland. A closer examination, however, reveals that a great deal of the rhetoric behind implicit structures of power in the state was based on ideas about racial fitness that were similar to eugenic ideas. For this reason, eugenic ideas

²¹² Hodder, "The interpretation of documents and material culture", p. 122.

may not have been articulated as explicitly as was the case elsewhere, but ideas about racial fitness were ubiquitous. This chapter explores the correlation of ideas about racial fitness and eugenic ideas during the first half of the twentieth century. It examines the incidence of the word *eugenics* itself in Queensland debate, in order to ascertain how the word and the movement were perceived in Queensland at this time. It also explores several related concerns about racial fitness and degeneration, science, efficiency, modernism and heredity. In contrast to subsequent chapters, it examines these ideas as general concerns, rather than as they related to particular areas of discourse. This chapter utilises primarily newspaper and journal sources.

Chapter Two examines the incidence of eugenic ideology and ideas about racial fitness in discourse surrounding mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults in Queensland between 1900 and 1929. It argues that during this period, various anxieties were expressed about both these groups. One of the features of international scientific writing on these groups was a clear differentiation in classification between the mentally ill and the mentally “defective”. In Queensland during the early twentieth century, this distinction was, for the most part, not made. Anxieties about these groups at this time focused on fears about social control, but they also encompassed issues of racial fitness. Several of the ideas expressed about both these groups reflected a eugenic influence. Chapter Three examines ideas about these two groups between 1930 and 1950.

This subject is divided into two chapters because it is argued that in this area, more than any other, there was a significant change after 1930. During this period, there was an international debate on the issue of sterilisation of the mentally ill and the mentally “defective”. This debate also occurred in Queensland. After 1930, there was an increased tendency to characterise the mentally ill, and more particularly the mentally “defective”, as a “menace”, and the Queensland government showed a much greater interest in finding solutions to this “problem”. Both Chapter Two and Chapter Three explore the problematic classification of these two groups of people. These two chapters utilise newspaper and journal sources, archival sources, and official government reports and debates.

Chapter Four examines eugenic ideas and ideas about racial fitness in discourse about the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland. It argues that this discourse, more than any other, could be expected to demonstrate the influence of eugenic ideas on debate in Queensland. There were widespread racial anxieties among Europeans in Queensland during this period, and a significant proportion of these focused on sexual relationships between Europeans and Aboriginals. This chapter uses both public and government sources to argue that many of the ideas expressed about the Aboriginal population of Queensland, and particularly about those designated by the racist term “half-castes”, displayed the influence of eugenic thought. It argues that many of the

ideas expressed, and particularly about this latter sub-group, were similar in kind to those expressed about mental “defectives”. The chapter focuses on the Aboriginal population of the state, as it is argued that discourse about this group of people displayed significantly more eugenic influence than that about other “non-white” races.

Chapter Five examines eugenic ideas concerned with the education and training of children. Education was an important goal of eugenics movements, and some of these ideas were adopted in Queensland. An investigation of ideas about mentally “defective” children is included in this chapter, separately from discussion in Chapters Two and Three on mentally “defective” adults, because it is argued that children were seen as a major area of intervention and debate in relation to this issue. There was a belief that the “problem” of mental “deficiency” could be greatly reduced by judicious and early classification and intervention. Although the ideas expressed about these children were similar to ideas about mentally “unfit” adults, separating the two issues allows this chapter to consider those issues relating to children in greater depth. This chapter also explores the incidence of eugenic ideology and ideas about racial fitness as they appeared in discourse about other “problem” children. Finally, the chapter examines issues in education that were considered relevant to ideas of racial fitness, those of medical inspections, physical education, and sex education. It contends that it is in these areas that

continuity is clear between ideas of racial fitness up to the 1930s, and ideas of national and individual fitness from the 1940s onwards.

Chapter Six examines ideas about the white race in Queensland. It argues that one of the most important areas in which eugenic ideas appeared in public and government debate in Queensland was in discussions about the “white” race and national character. These discussions focused on ways of improving national fitness, and thus encompassed ideas about racial fitness. This chapter will first consider general debates on the national character, examining what desirable characteristics were considered to be, and the various ways proposed to achieve them. It will then turn to an investigation of the continuing debate about the feasibility of the white race living and working in the tropics. It was often argued that tropical climates caused racial degeneration in white people. Finally, the chapter will examine discourse about immigration. Immigration is discussed in this chapter rather than in Chapter Four because it is argued that much debate about immigration focused on white immigrants, and on selecting immigrants carefully in order to improve the overall racial fitness of Queensland society.

These six chapters provide an overview of a range of ideas about racial fitness expressed in public debate in Queensland between 1900 and 1950. They reveal that ideas about racial fitness and the best way to deal

with sections of society deemed unfit were widespread in various discourses in the state in the first half of the twentieth century. These ideas frequently intersected with eugenic ideology. They were often expressed by people in influential positions, and as such, would undoubtedly have affected groups, and particularly marginalised groups, targeted by these ideas.

Chapter One

“The commercial value of life”

Eugenic ideology and racial fitness in Queensland

In 1910, the *Week*, a Brisbane daily newspaper, published an editorial entitled “The commercial value of life”. After a lengthy discussion on the various factors the *Week* believed to be desirable in the Queensland population, the editorial concluded that:

When in a rising State the life of the citizens is healthy and vigorous; when the population is increasing at the normal rate; when such increase is augmented by a wisely administered immigration system; when those institutions and provisions which aim at raising the standard of life, physical and mental, are doing their proper work and having their due effect in increasing vigour and in heightening efficiency, then will be demonstrated the fact that the commercial value of individual life to the State is simply incalculable.¹

This conclusion displayed the way in which various topics relating to racial fitness were linked in Queensland debate at this time. Concerns about the “normal” increase of the population, and about (implicitly British) immigration were common, and were associated with ideas about improving the white population of Queensland. These ideas were seen as complementary components of a unified whole; the whole in question

¹ “Commercial value of life”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

being an efficient and civilised society, where each individual was contributing to the “commercial value” of the state. Each of the components was considered integral to a healthy society. This editorial was notable, however, for its expressed hope that “Some day ... the State will take into account the science of laying the foundations of a sound physical condition by attending to hereditary factors and influences.”² This reference to eugenics was unusual in Queensland debate during this period, but the concerns raised in the editorial about the best way to achieve a desirable population were not. This chapter explores the articulation of ideas about racial fitness, and their relation to eugenics, in Queensland between 1900 and 1950.

This chapter argues that these ideas were present in a range of discourses during this period. It will explore the political, economic and social background to eugenic ideology and racial fitness in Queensland. The eugenics movement as a formal entity was never as influential in Queensland as it was internationally, or even in some southern states of Australia. An investigation of the political and social structure of Queensland at this time is necessary to explain the absence of eugenics organisations. The chapter will further argue that despite this absence, there were entrenched ideologies in Queensland that both focused on the best way to improve the white race, and harshly stigmatised those identified as unproductive members of society. This chapter will explore

² “Commercial value of life”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

the intersections between these ideas and the development of eugenic ideas during the twentieth century.

The chapter will first discuss the economic, political and social situation in Queensland during the first half of the twentieth century, arguing that the absence of a formal eugenics movement can be explained by factors specific to Queensland at this time. The decentralised nature of the state, as well as its political and social emphasis on rural concerns were central to these factors. The fact that, during most of the first half of the twentieth century, Queensland was under the political control of a strongly Catholic Labor government must also be considered as a factor in the failure of the eugenics movement to establish itself in the state.³

The chapter will then explore contrasting elements of Queensland society which indicate that concerns about racial fitness and improving the race were deeply ingrained in debate in the state. The impact of extensive legislation aimed at those who deviated from societal norms, introduced in Queensland in the nineteenth century, will be considered in this context. The existence of such legislation points to the fact that fears

³ In Australia and internationally, the Catholic church and organised labour movements tended to be among the most consistent opponents of eugenic ideas: Bent Sigurd Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark: eugenics and the ascent of the welfare state", in Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the welfare state: sterilization policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), p. 51; William H. Schneider, *Quality and quantity: the quest for biological regeneration in twentieth century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3; Diana Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness: eugenics in Australia, 1910s to 1930s*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1996, p. 314.

about those perceived as outside society were prevalent in the state. Other factors that will be considered in this context are the racial tensions existing in Queensland, and the issue of white settlement of the tropics. These topics will be explored at greater length in subsequent chapters. Despite the lack of an organised eugenics movement in Queensland, there is evidence that eugenic ideology was influential in certain discourses in the state between 1900 and 1950. The chapter will survey the incidence of these ideas, and the ways in which they intersected with ideas about racial fitness.

The dramatic rise in popularity of eugenic ideas and organisations in the early twentieth century, a phenomenon that was apparent in Australia as well as internationally, has been extensively documented.⁴ The popularity of eugenics movements at this time was due to changing economic and social circumstances during the late nineteenth century, out of which developed several reform movements.⁵ The eugenics

⁴ Garland E. Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, 1910-1940: an essay in institutional history", *Osiris*, 2nd series, 2 (1986), p. 226; David Barker, "The biology of stupidity: genetics, eugenics and mental deficiency in the inter-war years", *British Journal for the History of Science*, 22, (1989), p. 349; Ann Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control: the case of Marion Piddington", *Hecate*, 15, 1 (1989), p. 74; Marouf Arif Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics in Anglo-American thought* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 25; Daniel J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics: genetics and the uses of human heredity* 2nd ed., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 57-8; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 2; G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain 1900-1914* (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976), p. 2; Schneider, *Quality and quantity*, pp. 2-3; Rob Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 40, 3 (1994), p. 319.

⁵ Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", p. 255; Carol Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women: the impact of scientific theories on attitudes towards women, 1870-1920", in Elizabeth Windschuttle, ed., *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on*

movement combined older ideas about social reform with new scientific discoveries about heredity.⁶ Historians of science in the last twenty years argue that there is a constant dialogue between the development of ideas in the scientific arena and those in more general debate, a process that was particularly apparent in relation to eugenics.⁷ A belief in the power of applied science to improve society was essential to the rise of the eugenics movement.⁸

Many historians have argued that the prewar period of Australian society was one of enormous democratic and social reform, and this is certainly true to an extent.⁹ This view, however, ignores the fact that reactionary philosophies such as Social Darwinism were popular in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁰ In addition, fears about

Australia, 1788-1978 (Auckland: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 133-34; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 6; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 72; Rosalind Kidd, *The way we civilise: Aboriginal Affairs – the untold story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), pp. 18-19; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 2; David McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", *Melbourne Working Papers*, 4 (1982/3), p. 18.

⁶ Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", p. 226; Barker, "The biology of stupidity", p. 353; W. Jethro Brown, "Economic welfare and racial vitality", *Economic Record*, 3, 4 (1927), p. 16; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 4.

⁷ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, pp. 6-13; Howard Horwitz, "Always with us", *American Literary History*, 10, 2 (1998), p. 318; Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Introduction", in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 4-5.

⁸ Frank Dikötter, "Race culture: recent perspectives on the history of eugenics", *The American Historical Review*, 103, 2 (1998), p. 468; Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 55.

⁹ Helen Bourke, "Sociology and the social sciences in Australia, 1912-1928", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 17, 1 (1981), p. 27; Carol Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 19, 75 (1980), p. 199; Craig Campbell, "Liberalism in Australian history, 1880-1920", in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), pp. 24, 28; Richard White, *Inventing Australia: images and identity 1688-1980* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), pp. 50, 86.

¹⁰ Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women", p. 136; Mary Cawte, "Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency", *Historical*

the birthrate were strongly linked to prevalent racial anxieties and concerns about Asian invasion, as well as concerns about a decline in national character and virility.¹¹ Early twentieth century debates about the birthrate, about ethnic “purity”, and about the growing numbers of defectives and degenerates in the country all reflected considerable fears that racial degeneration was occurring in Australia.¹² Australian commentators who espoused eugenic beliefs discussed these topics as well as more “positive” eugenic strategies to increase the birthrate.¹³ It must also be acknowledged that it was often the most “progressive” reformers who supported eugenic ideas.¹⁴ By the 1920s, fears about a

Studies, 22, 86 (1986), p. 36; John Docker, “Can the centre hold?: conceptions of the state 1890-1925”, in Sydney Labour History Group, ed., *What rough beast?: the state and social order in Australian history* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp. 71-2; Raymond Evans, “The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland”, in Roe, *Social policy in Australia*, p. 88; Stephen Garton, “Sir Charles Mackellar: psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales, 1900-1914”, *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), p. 24.

¹¹ David Walker, *Anxious nation: Australia and the rise of Asia 1850-1939* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), pp. 4-5; Sharyn Pearce, “The best career is matrimony: first-wave journalism and the Australian Girl”, *Hecate*, 18, 2 (1998), p. 68.

¹² Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia”, p. 36; Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 89; Grant Rodwell, “Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement: eugenics and Australian civic and school playgrounds, 1900-1920”, *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 37, 2 (1996), pp. 131, 147.

¹³ Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia”, pp. 40-3; Margaret Conley, “Citizens – protect your birthright!: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW”, *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), pp. 9-11; Joy Damousi, “Modernism, Socialism and Communism: a gender critique”, *Journal of Australian Studies* 32 (1992), pp. 35-6; Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 21; Ross Jones, “The master potter and the rejected pots: eugenic legislation in Victoria, 1918-1939”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 30, 113 (1999), pp. 321-22; Rodwell, “Only by persistent effort”, pp. 132-33; Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, p. 322.

¹⁴ Tony Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and “half-castes”, *Aboriginal History*, 14, 1-2 (1990), p. 108; Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry, “Vessels of progressivism?: Tasmanian state girls and eugenics, 1900-1940”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), p. 322; Sarah Mirams, “For their moral health: James Barrett, urban progressive ideas and national park preservation in Victoria”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 120 (2002), p. 250; Michael Roe, *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought 1890-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp. 13-14; Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, p. 322. This was not confined to Australia: Gerald N. Grob, *The mad among us: a history of the care of America’s mentally ill* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 141; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 18-22; Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 1, 12; George Robb, “Eugenics,

declining birth rate had largely evaporated in Australia, and at this stage, eugenic arguments began to focus on improving the desirable characteristics of the population.¹⁵

The international popularity of the eugenics movement rested to a large extent on the flexibility of its ideology, aided by its ability to make connections between a variety of hitherto unrelated subjects. Many eugenics organisations devoted a large part of their efforts to propaganda, or, in their preferred terminology, educating public opinion.¹⁶ The primary purpose of the Eugenics Education Society was to conduct popular campaigns in favour of eugenics.¹⁷ Its three main aims were “to set forth the national importance” and “to spread a knowledge” of eugenics, and “to further eugenic teaching”.¹⁸ These aims were no doubt based on Francis Galton’s strong support for persistence in setting forth the national importance of eugenics, believing as he did that

spirituality and sex differentiation in Edwardian England: the case of Frances Swiney”, *Journal of Women’s History*, 10, 3 (1998), pp. 97-8.

¹⁵ Curthoys, “Eugenics, feminism and birth control”, p. 80; Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, p. 329.

¹⁶ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 242; Moira Fitzpatrick, “Preventing the unfit from breeding: the Mental Deficiency Bill in Western Australia, 1929”, in Penelope Hetherington, ed., *Childhood and society in Western Australia* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988), pp. 144-45; Bacchi, “The nature-nurture debate in Australia”, p. 209.

¹⁷ Papers of the Eugenics Society, SA/EUG, Box 48, E2-5, Wellcome Institute Archives. The Eugenics Society had a complementary organisation in the Galton Laboratory, which was formed for the purpose of conducting scientific research.

¹⁸ Faith Schenk and A. S. Parkes, “The activities of the Eugenics Society”, *Eugenics Review*, 60 (1968), p. 143. Eugenics organisations in other countries were also established with propaganda as a primary aim. See Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, pp. 227, 238, who states that the second major aim of the Eugenics Record Office, after “to carry out research on human heredity”, was “to educate laypersons about the importance of eugenics research and the implications of eugenic findings for public policy”.

eugenic reform would be effected largely by popular opinion.¹⁹ Major Leonard Darwin, the president of the society, stated that the dissemination of knowledge about eugenics and heredity was as important as the gaining of knowledge itself, because reform could not be undertaken along eugenic lines until the public was educated.²⁰ Throughout the 1900s and 1910s, the Eugenics Education Society enthusiastically promoted their beliefs. One of their most successful events was the First International Eugenics Congress, held in London in 1912.²¹ The main aim of this congress had been to publicise eugenic ideas and to promote international cooperation between eugenics organisations.²² Advocates of eugenics also sought to associate eugenics with a range of social activities, thus broadening the potential appeal of these beliefs.²³ C. W. Saleeby, for example, described eugenics as “a subject to which no human affair is wholly alien”.²⁴

¹⁹ Francis Galton, “Eugenics: its definition, scope and aims”, in *Essays in eugenics* (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1909), p. 42.

²⁰ Leonard Darwin, “Introduction”, in Eugenics Education Society, ed., *Problems in eugenics: papers communicated to the First International Eugenics Congress, held at the University of London, July 24th to 30th, 1912* (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1912). See also Edward J. Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics: expert authority and the Mental Deficiency Bill”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 24, 80 (1991), p. 49: In 1910, an editorial in the *Eugenics Review*, the official journal of the Eugenics Society, argued that although government leaders were generally supportive of the aims of the society, only overwhelming public support would lead them to enact legislation.

²¹ Schenk and Parkes, “The activities of the Eugenics Society”, p. 144. Australians A. B. Piddington and Edith Onions also attended this conference, although not as delegates (Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 217).

²² Sybil Gotto, “Preface”, in *Problems in eugenics*; Leonard Darwin, Invitation to First International Eugenics Congress, 7 May 1912, copy forwarded to Chief Secretary, Queensland, in-letter 7200 of 1912, PRE/A407, Queensland State Archives.

²³ See for example Brown, “Economic welfare and racial vitality”, pp. 16-18. Also Dikötter, “Race culture”, p. 467; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, pp. 5-6; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 57-8; Grant Rodwell, “Professor Harvey Sutton: national hygienist as eugenicist and educator”, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, 2 (1998), pp. 169-72; Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, p. 319.

²⁴ C. W. Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture: an outline of eugenics* (London: Cassell, 1909), p. xii. Interestingly, Leonard Darwin took the opposite view, arguing for

Despite the value that eugenic organisations placed on propaganda, and its apparent success, the ability of these organisations to translate their beliefs into legislation was variable at best. This lack of success was related to the controversy surrounding the definition of *eugenics*.²⁵ In 1913, the Eugenics Education Society was instrumental in the promotion and passage of the British *Mental Deficiency Act*. Debate over the bill, however, was marked by an absence of explicit references to eugenics, at least on the part of supporters of the legislation.²⁶ Supporters were careful not to mention the word *eugenics*, or any particular scientific theory of mental deficiency, instead discussing individual case histories or statistics provided by the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded.²⁷ On the other hand, opponents of the bill were anxious to associate it with eugenics, condemning the extent to which personal liberty under the bill rested with eugenicists. During the debate, no-one defended the clause that advocated segregation for those “in whose case it is desirable in the interests of the community that they should be deprived of the opportunity of procreating children”.²⁸ One

a narrow definition of eugenics in order to keep its aims clear (“Practical eugenics: a survey of the work of the congress”, *The Times* (London), 31 July 1912, p. 4).

²⁵ Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics”, pp. 52-3.

²⁶ This reluctance was apparent in the debate over the bill, as reported in *The Times*, 18 May 1912, p. 12, where the only two mentions of eugenics were derogatory.

²⁷ Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics”, pp. 52-3. Larson argues that this is not likely to have been an oversight, as Major Leonard Darwin, the president of the Eugenics Education Society, personally briefed parliamentarians before the debate.

²⁸ *The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12.

member, Roberts, described certain clauses of the bill as nothing but “the latest novelty of the eugenic theory”.²⁹

Eugenic legislation introduced in other countries was also marked by controversy over definitions. In Denmark, the final version of legislation for the sterilisation of the mentally ill, introduced in 1929, made no mention of eugenic intent.³⁰ This was despite the fact that its drafting was partly due to pressure from eugenics organisations, and the considerable debate that occurred in parliament over the exact interpretation of the word *eugenics*.³¹ Bent Sigurd Hansen argues that in this case the ambiguity of eugenic beliefs in fact aided the passage of the legislation.³² In America, the enactment of legislation for the sterilisation of the feeble-minded was introduced with explicit eugenic intent, but Braslow argues that the practice of sterilisation had little to do with eugenic ideology.³³

Acceptance of eugenic beliefs as a rationale for legislation was therefore varied. Frequent criticisms were directed towards eugenics and eugenicists. Many argued that eugenics was not a genuine science, but rather a short-lived fad, and even those who were more sympathetic were

²⁹ *The Times* (London), 18 May 1912, p. 12.

³⁰ Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark”, p. 38.

³¹ Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark”, p. 38.

³² Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark”, p. 39.

³³ Joel Braslow, *Mental ills and bodily cures: psychiatric treatment in the first half of the twentieth century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 55-7.

apt to point out that information on heredity was far from complete.³⁴ Eugenics organisations were often unable to produce reliable statistics to support their claims.³⁵ Many also disliked the claims made by some in the movement that eugenics was not merely a science, but a new religion or moral code of ethics.³⁶ Galton, for example, argued that the final stage of the dissemination of eugenic ideas was their introduction into the national conscience like a new religion.³⁷ The extent to which eugenicists succeeded in promoting this link can be gauged by the fact that eugenics was included amongst the topics that were considered to have a “bearing upon moral education”, at a Moral Education Congress in the Netherlands in 1912.³⁸ The flexibility of eugenic ideology aided its dissemination, and its links with other movements. At the same time,

³⁴ “Eugenics and militarism: social aspects of the training for war”, *The Times* (London), 30 July 1912, p. 4; “Aspects of eugenics: Mr. Balfour on the doctrine of survival: the future of the race”, *The Times* (London), 25 July 1912, p. 9; Dikötter, “Race culture”, p. 476. In 1912, G. L. Bruce told the Special Schools Sub-Committee in London that a proposal to investigate the family history of “feeble-minded” and “normal” children “was simply an attempt to get out some very bad statistics to bolster up a certain view of things” (“Heredity and mental deficiency: proposed inquiry by the London Education Committee”, *The Times* (London), 12 December 1912, p. 13). See also “Sanitation and eugenics: address by Sir J. Crichton-Browne”, *The Times* (London), 4 September 1912, p. 6; “Education and eugenics: the efficiency of the English public school”, *The Times* (London), 29 July 1912, p. 4.

³⁵ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, pp. 242-43; Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 4-5, 18-19; Hamish G. Spencer and Diane B. Paul, “The failure of a scientific critique: David Heron, Karl Pearson and Mendelian eugenics”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 31, 111 (1998), pp. 441-452. See also Lancelot Hogben, *Genetic principles in medicine and social science* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), pp. 203-4, 206, 217-18; H. S. Jennings, *The biological basis of human nature* (London: Faber and Faber, 1930), pp. 245-47.

³⁶ In 1926, the American society published a tract entitled *A Eugenics Catechism*, and in the same year launched a eugenics sermon contest (Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 61).

³⁷ Galton, “Eugenics”, p. 42. See also Karl Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics* 2nd ed. (London: Dulau, 1909), pp. 3, 25; Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. ix.

³⁸ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 16 November 1912, p. 7. See also *Age* (Melbourne), 29 July 1912, p. 6.

however, this flexibility led to confusion over the exact nature of eugenics, thus challenging its status as a discrete movement, and in some cases impeding the translation of eugenic beliefs into legislative action.

Eugenics movements thus reflected specific societal preoccupations, but maintained an essential belief that it was both possible and desirable to influence natural selection in order to improve racial fitness.³⁹ Notwithstanding the varied success of eugenic legislation, or the ways in which the movement adapted to diverse societies, it is possible to identify certain economic, political and social circumstances that predisposed certain societies to an acceptance of eugenics. Daniel Kevles contends that certain conditions were “essential” to an acceptance of eugenics in a society: industrialisation, the growth of big business, sprawl of cities and slums, massive migrations from the countryside, and immigration from abroad.⁴⁰ An increase of state control in many areas that had previously been individually regulated was partly a response to these new economic pressures, and with increased state control came increased taxes.⁴¹ This had two consequences for groups who did not pay taxes or otherwise

³⁹ Carl Jay Bajema, “Introduction”, in Bajema, ed., *Eugenics: then and now* (Stroudsburg: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1976), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 72. The last condition was more important in America than in Britain. See also Gunnar Broberg, “Scandinavia: an introduction”, in Broberg and Roll-Hansen, *Eugenics and the welfare state*, p. 3, who argues that industrialisation and urbanisation were important preconditions for the Scandinavian eugenics movement urbanisation; Catrine Clay and Michael Leapman, *Master race: the Lebensborn experiment in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), p. 18; R. Grant Steen, *DNA and destiny: nature and nurture in human behaviour* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1996), p. 36.

⁴¹ Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 92-4.

“contribute” to society. First, they came to be seen as a burden on taxpaying citizens, with useful citizens now defined in opposition to the useless; and second, they came to be seen as the state’s responsibility.⁴² These economic and political pressures both contributed to, and were influenced by, a social climate of resentment and fear towards those who were considered unproductive. Together, these pressures led to calls for the care and control of these groups by the state. In Australia, as overseas, the eugenics movement represented one manifestation of increasing state intervention into many aspects of life.⁴³

Economic, political and social background to eugenic ideology in Queensland

The factors that contributed to the international popularity of the eugenics movement were largely absent from Queensland.⁴⁴ The conditions discussed as having an impact on the acceptance of eugenics movements were significantly different in Queensland, in comparison to Europe and America, and even the southern states of Australia. Queensland was under-industrialised, dominated by rural concerns, and, for a large part of the twentieth century, controlled by a Labor government. Also, professional middle classes had comparatively little influence on policy in the state in the early twentieth century. On the

⁴² Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 72.

⁴³ Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘half-castes’”, p. 108; Campbell, “Liberalism in Australian history”, pp. 24, 28; Docker, “Can the centre hold?”, p. 58.

⁴⁴ David Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, 1900 to 1930*, PhD thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1999, pp. 1-2, 15.

face of it, these factors appear sufficient to explain the absence of eugenics organisations in the state. On the other hand, there were elements of Queensland society which indicated that concerns about racial fitness were prevalent. The socio-economic and political circumstances in Queensland as they related to the possible popularity of the eugenics movement and eugenic beliefs will now be examined.

In the early part of the twentieth century, rural concerns and policies dominated Queensland economy, politics and society. Ross Fitzgerald argues that, historically, the Queensland economy has had a "rural bias".⁴⁵ David Cameron contends that Queensland was under-industrialised in comparison to the rest of Australia, although he also states that the extent of the difference has been exaggerated.⁴⁶ The economic structure of Queensland significantly influenced the development of its government and society.⁴⁷ Politics and social life, as well as the economy, were ruled by rural interests.⁴⁸ From 1870 to the early 1900s, pastoralists were the most powerful force in Queensland,

⁴⁵ Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 3.

⁴⁶ Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Peter Crossman, Martin Bell, Richard Jackson, Claire Runciman, Norm Elridge, Jim Skinner and John Western, *Migration, population growth and regional development in Queensland* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993), p. 55; Douglas Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", in R. L. Doherty, ed., *A medical school for Queensland* (St Lucia: Boolarong Publications, 1986), p. 14.

⁴⁸ Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland*, pp. 34-6; Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 3.

economically and politically.⁴⁹ This was primarily due to Queensland's political structure, in which electoral success was dependent on the rural electorate, while the metropolitan vote was less significant.⁵⁰ As eugenics movements had developed in response to circumstances in industrialised societies, the fact that Queensland was relatively under-industrialised in the early twentieth century suggests that the eugenics movement would not be popular in the state.

Conversely, it should be noted that many eugenic organisations promoted a rural lifestyle as an ideal, one which would promote good health both in the present and for the future of the race.⁵¹ This belief was related to the idea that modern life, and particularly city residence, was contributing to racial degeneration.⁵² In 1918, Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson argued in their book *Applied eugenics* for a back-to-the-farm movement, stating that rural living would counteract the racially degenerating effect of urban living.⁵³ Rural life was also romanticised in Queensland public debate, and farming was promoted as a wholesome

⁴⁹ Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), pp. 88-9, 108.

⁵¹ "Racial traits and national character", *The Times* (London), 5 October 1912, p. 7; Docker, "Can the centre hold?", p. 60; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 42; Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia Volume 4: The succeeding age: 1901-1942* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press), p. 35.

⁵² Michael Banton, *The idea of race* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), p. 93; Clay and Leapman, *Master race*, pp. 14-15; Caroline Daley, "The strongman of eugenics, Eugen Sandow", *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 120 (2002), p. 240; Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 7-8.

⁵³ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918).

and economically viable lifestyle.⁵⁴ A rural ideology was accepted in Queensland by both the ruling and the working classes, and both despised city and urban life.⁵⁵

Ideas about the value of rural living and hard work in improving the (white) race were common in Queensland discourse at this time.⁵⁶ In 1908, the *Queenslander* discussed recent international movements towards agricultural life. The newspaper stated that this movement was “represented in the United Kingdom by the ‘Back to the Land’ cry, in Australia by ‘Settle the people on the land’, while in the United States ‘The New Agriculture’ is tremendously popular.”⁵⁷ It also stated that farming was becoming more popular than it had been in former times, when it “was not considered to provide for intelligence or mental training to any extent; now it gives full scope to the most active-minded of men.”⁵⁸ A contempt for city life was also apparent in the remarks of Sir George Reid, the premier of New South Wales, reported by the *Queenslander*, that while city dwellers were not fit to be pioneers, he hoped that “the ambition of the Imperial race” would inspire young Australians to become something more than office clerks.⁵⁹ In 1921, at a conference of officers of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction, it was

⁵⁴ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 94.

⁵⁵ Cameron, An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, pp. 34-6.

⁵⁶ “Population of Australia”, *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

⁵⁷ “Attractions of agricultural life”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 28 March 1908, p. 3.

⁵⁸ “Attractions of agricultural life”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 28 March 1908, p. 3.

⁵⁹ “Australian prosperity”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1914, p. 40.

stated that children in country schools were “the children upon whom we were depending, very largely, to develop this country”, and “the type of children who would become the most efficient type of colonists”.⁶⁰ It should be noted that Rafter has questioned the extent of the influence of romanticised rural ideals, at least on some reformers.⁶¹

The dominance of Labor governments in Queensland after 1915 must also be considered as a factor in the lack of a formal eugenics movement in the state. From 1915 to 1929, and again from 1932 to 1957, Labor governments held power in Queensland. Supporters of Australian and international eugenics movements tended to be conservative politically.⁶² In Queensland, the majority of Labor parliamentarians represented rural electorates, and thus can have been expected to pursue rural concerns and policies, which tended not to reflect eugenic interests.⁶³ It is also significant that Roman Catholicism exerted an unusually strong influence on Queensland Labor.⁶⁴ The Catholic Church was one of the

⁶⁰ Report of speeches at Conference of District Inspectors of Schools and other Officers of the Department, p. 16, 6 June 1921, in-letter not provided, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁶¹ Rafter, *White trash*, p. 13. Commitment to rural ideals in Queensland was not accompanied by actual participation in rural settlement schemes (Cameron, An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, pp. 34-6).

⁶² Jones, “The master potter and the rejected pots”, p. 326; Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics”, p. 46; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 14; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 112; Diana Wyndham, “Plans for producing better babies”, *History*, 54 (1997), p. 25.

⁶³ Macintyre, *The succeeding age*, p. 105. Even during the 1930s, Hanlon was the only member of cabinet who represented a metropolitan electorate (Gordon, “Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine”, p. 15).

⁶⁴ Ross Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), p. 327, and Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, pp. 11-14.

major opponents of the eugenics movement internationally.⁶⁵ Catholics turned against eugenic ideas particularly strongly after 1930.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, it is easy to overstate the extent to which eugenics was a conservative movement.⁶⁷ Many socialists and communists supported eugenic goals, and many of the countries that introduced eugenic legislation were governed by left-wing parties.⁶⁸

It must also be noted that the development and rise to power of Queensland Labor was closely tied to overtly racialist policies.⁶⁹ Working class and labour press in Queensland was significantly more concerned with racial issues and maintaining the "purity" of white Australia than was the case in other states.⁷⁰ In many countries, racial tensions were a

⁶⁵ See Stephen Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies: re-considering eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940", *Historical Studies*, 103 (1994), p. 181; Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 10; Dikötter, "Race culture", p. 476; Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics", pp. 155-56; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 113. During the 1930s, opposition from the Catholic Church and the Labour Party in England was a significant factor in the prevention of a sterilisation bill drafted in response to the Brock Report (Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness*, p. 314).

⁶⁶ This opposition can be attributed to "Casti Connubii", the papal bull of 1930 (Schneider, *Quality and quantity*, p. 3). In Denmark, Catholics were the only organised group which consistently protested against eugenic legislation (Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", p. 51).

⁶⁷ Docker, "Can the centre hold?", p. 78; Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", p. 145; Rodwell, "'Only by persistent effort'", p. 132; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 113.

⁶⁸ Richard Cleminson, *Anarchism, science and sex: eugenics in eastern Spain, 1900-1937* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 9; Damousi, "Modernism, socialism and communism", p. 36. See H. J. Muller, *Out of the night: a biologist's view of the future* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936), for an example of a socialist eugenic view.

⁶⁹ Andrew Markus, *Australian race relations 1788-1993* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994), pp. 114, 117, 120.

⁷⁰ Raymond Evans, "'Keep white the strain': race relations in a colonial setting", in Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland: a history of exclusion, exploitation and extermination*, 3rd ed. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1993), pp. 4-5, and Evans, *Fighting words: writing about race* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), p. 43.

factor that contributed to the popularity of eugenics movements.⁷¹ The dominance of the Labor party in Queensland politics is therefore not sufficient to explain the absence of a formal eugenics movement in the state. In fact, Queensland governments pursued fundamentally similar social policies throughout the twentieth century, and not all of those Queensland politicians who espoused ideas related to eugenics were from conservative parties.⁷²

There is evidence that neither conservative nor Labor parties in Queensland were particularly interested in encouraging the dissemination of explicitly eugenic ideas. In 1912, Charles McGowen wrote to the Queensland Premier Digby Denham, stating that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had sent an invitation for all states of Australia to be represented at the 1912 Eugenics Congress in London, and the Agent General in London had been instructed to represent New South Wales.⁷³ Denham replied that it had been decided that

⁷¹ Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", p. 10; Horwitz, "Always with us", p. 323; Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi connection: eugenics, American racism, and German National Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 32; Angus McLaren, "The creation of a haven for 'human thoroughbreds': the sterilization of the feeble-minded and the mentally ill in British Columbia", *Canadian Historical Review* 67, 2 (June 1986), pp. 134-36; Gerald O'Brien, "Protecting the social body: use of the organism metaphor in fighting the 'menace of the feeble-minded'", *Mental Retardation*, 37, 3 (1999), pp. 190-91.

⁷² Evans argues that although the Labor party was ostensibly concerned with the "under-dog", they envisioned this only as white male workers; for non-workers (unless they had a "valid" excuse), and for non-whites, their contempt was equal to that of conservative parties (Evans, "The hidden colonists", p. 88); see also Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland*, pp. 14, 34.

⁷³ Charles S. McGowen, Sydney to D. Denham, Premier of Queensland, Brisbane, 12 July 1912, in-letter 8250 of 1912, PRE/A407, Queensland State Archives.

Queensland would not be represented at the conference.⁷⁴ This indicates a low level of interest in the subject on the part of the Queensland government, although Denham did retain a copy of the invitation in order to show the governor, Sir William McGregor, who was away from Brisbane at this time.⁷⁵

In 1918, the English Eugenics Society sent out a circular to Dominion countries in order to gauge the level of interest in eugenics. Major Leonard Darwin, the president of the society, was the author of this circular, addressed to Lady Goold-Adams, the wife of Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams, then governor of Queensland. Darwin was concerned with “the application of the principles of eugenics”, and the ways in which this “might affect British policy in regard to various questions of social reconstruction.”⁷⁶ Darwin, and the society, believed that “some of the most important questions involved are those affecting the quality of the population of the Empire as a whole, and cooperation between the different parts of the British Empire is necessary if useful action is to be taken.”⁷⁷ He was therefore interested in any steps that were being taken “in order to maintain the racial qualities of the Australians in the

⁷⁴ D. Denham, Chief Secretary, Brisbane to Premier of New South Wales, Sydney, 17 July 1912, in-letter 8250 of 1912, PRE/A407, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁵ According to a handwritten note on the invitation sent by the New South Wales premier: L. Harcourt, Downing Street to “The Officer Administering the Government of Queensland”, 10 May 1912, in-letter 7200 of 1912, PRE/A407, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁶ Major Leonard Darwin, President, Eugenics Education Society, London to Lady Goold-Adams, Government House, Brisbane, 26 April 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁷ Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

future.”⁷⁸ Questions of racial fitness and development were made more urgent by the losses sustained during the war “amongst our best types”.⁷⁹ The society was particularly interested to know whether there was any possibility of establishing an organisation similar to the Eugenics Education Society in Queensland, as they believed that such an organisation was greatly needed, “in order to study with special reference to your Dominion the problems involved, and to make suitable representations to your Government as and when necessary”.⁸⁰ The society also requested to be informed of the extent to which “the Eugenic movement has your personal support”.⁸¹

Lady Goold-Adams replied briefly that she was unable to give an early reply due to the range of issues covered in the letter.⁸² She then forwarded both the original letter and her reply to the Home Department, stating that she considered the subject to be of interest.⁸³ The matter does not appear to have been followed up, however, with only an acknowledgment of the receipt of the forwarded communication being

⁷⁸ Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁹ Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁸⁰ Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁸¹ Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁸² Lady Goold-Adams, Government House, Brisbane to Darwin, President, Eugenics Education Society, 19 July 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁸³ Lady Goold-Adams, Government House to J. Huxham, Home Secretary, 19 July 1918, in-letter 6404 of 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

sent to Lady Goold-Adams.⁸⁴ Indeed, although Lady Goold-Adams professed her interest in the subject, there does not appear to have been any urgency on her part in pursuing it. The Home Secretary's Department later refused any visit from the Eugenics Education Society.⁸⁵ There were several reasons why the Queensland government would not have supported such a visit at this time.⁸⁶ This incident, combined with the decision not to send a representative to the 1912 congress suggest that Queensland governments, both conservative and Labor, were uninterested in eugenics, at least before 1920.

The social structure of early twentieth century Queensland differed significantly from that of overseas countries where there were strong eugenics movements. It also differed, although less markedly, from the southern states of Australia. The eugenics movement, like many other social movements, united disparate groups of people with little in common besides their interest in eugenics. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that in both Britain and America, eugenicists were predominantly middle

⁸⁴ Huxham to Lady Goold-Adams, 24 July 1918, in-letter 6404 of 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives. Governor Goold-Adams had a good relationship with the Labor government at this time (D. J. Murphy, "Abolition of the legislative council", in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, eds, *Labor in power: the Labor party and governments in Queensland 1915-57* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 103).

⁸⁵ Elizabeth McRobert, *Challinor Centre: the end of the line: a history of the institution also known as Sandy Gallop* (Queensland: Queensland Government, 1997), p. 86.

⁸⁶ It was the first term of the first Labor government in the state, there was political unrest, and the war was still on-going. See Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 142-46; Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 14-15.

class professionals: white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and educated.⁸⁷ This situation was generally replicated in Australia.⁸⁸ In Queensland, for most of the first half of the twentieth century, professionals did not exercise a major influence over government policy.⁸⁹ Parliament was dominated by rurally based members, and thus pastoral interests had greater sway in policy-making than that of any other interest group.⁹⁰

Within the professions, medicine had more links to the eugenics movement than any other. This was true for most European and American movements, and also for Australian ones.⁹¹ At the turn of the century, when eugenics was beginning to establish itself as an area of credible scientific interest, the medical profession was also entering an era of great influence over public health policy.⁹² Psychiatrists embraced eugenic ideas more readily than any other group of medical

⁸⁷ Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics", p. 45, argues that the promotion of English eugenic laws was largely carried out by "civic-minded activists drawn ... from the professional classes". See also Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the rat was white: a historical view of psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 85; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 63-4, 73; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 8; Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 2, 13-17; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, pp. 112-13; Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 112.

⁸⁸ Judith Bessant, "Described, measured and labelled: eugenics, youth policy and moral panic in Victoria in the 1950s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 31 (1991), pp. 18, 21-3; Cawte, "Cranometry and eugenics", particularly pp. 41-3; Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", p. 146; Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 180; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 326, 337; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", pp. 324, 329.

⁸⁹ Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915*, p. 307; Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", p. 12.

⁹⁰ Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland*, p. 34.

⁹¹ Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 11; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 8; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 328.

⁹² J. H. L. Cumpston Papers, MS613, Series 4, Parts 1-3, National Library, Canberra.

professionals.⁹³ Psychiatry was, at this time, still attempting to distance itself from the era of the mass incarceration of mental patients, and the consequent perception that psychiatrists were little more than jailers.⁹⁴ These factors combined to make eugenics particularly attractive to medical professionals, and particularly psychiatrists.⁹⁵

The attraction of middle class professionals to eugenics, particularly those working within the biological sciences, was due in large part to the scientific claims of the movement. Allen argues that eugenics “was the perfect biological theory of society in an era that was rapidly accepting notions of scientific management and control”.⁹⁶ During the early twentieth century, there was a growing belief that scientists were the best people to manage all areas of human affairs, from factories and government, to the germplasm of citizens.⁹⁷ Faith in science and its potential benefits for everyday life was essential to a belief in eugenics. Its proponents argued that eugenics simply represented the application

⁹³ Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘half-castes’”, p. 109; Dikötter, “Race culture”, pp. 470-71; Stephen Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of medicine in New South Wales, 1880-1940* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1988), pp. 76-7; Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, pp. 324-25.

⁹⁴ Stephen Garton, “Freud and the psychiatrists: the Australian debate 1900 to 1940”, in Brian Head and James Walter, eds, *Intellectual movements and Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 171; Grob, *The mad among us*, pp. 140-41; Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 506-7, 513, 521.

⁹⁵ For a contrasting view, see Shorter, who argues that psychiatrists were not particularly associated with the worst aspects of eugenics, such as policies of sterilisation and euthanasia (*A history of psychiatry: from the era of the asylum to the age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), p. 353).

⁹⁶ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 264.

⁹⁷ Bourke, “Sociology and the social sciences in Australia”, p. 26; Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia”, pp. 37, 40.

of the laws of heredity to everyday life, although it developed well beyond that.⁹⁸

There is evidence that there was interest in the value of applied science in Queensland during the early twentieth century. In 1900, the Queensland government introduced a new public health act.⁹⁹ This act was formulated partly in response to recent outbreaks of bubonic plague in Queensland and other parts of Australia.¹⁰⁰ Under the act, a new position, that of Commissioner of Public Health, was created. The commissioner would "be a medical practitioner and expert in sanitary science."¹⁰¹ This legislation was passed as a result of public pressure, and it provided for the centralisation of public health control, which gave the commissioner considerable powers of regulation.¹⁰² Dr Burnett Ham, an English-educated physician with a Diploma of Public Health from Cambridge, filled this position.¹⁰³ The new post indicated the beginning of a new era of medical dominance over expertise in a variety of fields. In 1909, Ham was replaced by J. S. C. Elkington, a pioneer in the field of public health in Australia who also displayed an interest in eugenics,

⁹⁸ Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English thought: the interaction between biological and social theory* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), p. 99.

⁹⁹ "New Health Act: Commissioner of Public Health", *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane), 1 August 1900, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Raphael Cilento and Clem Lack, *Triumph in the tropics: a historical sketch of Queensland* (Brisbane: Smith and Paterson, 1959), pp. 432-33. See, for example, "Sanitary science", *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane), 2 April 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ "New Health Act", *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane), 1 August 1900, p. 8.

¹⁰² Ross Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1987), pp. 58, 150.

¹⁰³ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 58.

and believed that applied science could solve social problems.¹⁰⁴ Elkington, more so than the 1900 act or the administrative actions of Ham, provided the foundations of the public health service in Queensland.¹⁰⁵

The growing interest in the value of science and medicine in Queensland at this time was also indicated by the establishment of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine in Townsville in 1909, under the direction of Anton Breinl.¹⁰⁶ This institute was the first medical research institute in Australia, and was established with high expectations. The *Queenslander* urged government funding for the institute, arguing that "Millions are spent annually on church missions. Why not a generous expenditure on missions of science?"¹⁰⁷ This not only demonstrated a faith in science, but also the possibility that science could replace religion, an idea that was suggested by some leaders of the eugenics movement.¹⁰⁸ The aim of the institute was to examine various health issues related to the settlement of the tropical north of Australia by

¹⁰⁴ Milton Lewis, *Managing madness: psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), p. 131; Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁵ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 92. Elkington was highly regarded in Queensland; he also sponsored Cilento's career (Fedora Fisher, "The role of Sir Raphael Cilento in the founding and development of the faculty of medicine", in Doherty, *A medical school for Queensland*, p. 17).

¹⁰⁶ Cilento, "Australia's heritage: health and building in tropical Australia: themes", p. 5, UQFL MSS 44/45, Box 14, Fryer Library. Breinl was an Austrian scientist who had been working in Britain prior to his appointment as director at the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine.

¹⁰⁷ "The school of tropical medicine", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 January 1910, p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ Galton, "Eugenics", p. 42. See also Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. ix.

Europeans.¹⁰⁹ The enthusiasm surrounding the institute, however, was never completely justified. For most of its existence, it remained isolated from mainstream medical research.¹¹⁰ It was under-resourced, and Commonwealth funding came with restrictions on the investigations that could be undertaken.¹¹¹

Research at the institute was disrupted by World War I.¹¹² By 1920, Breinl was the only member of staff with medical training, which seriously limited the amount of work he was able to do.¹¹³ Commonwealth control of the research became stricter as it provided more funding, and in 1921, the new Commonwealth Department of Health subsumed it.¹¹⁴ At this time, Breinl resigned, to be eventually replaced by Dr Raphael Cilento (later Sir). In 1930, the institute was relocated to Sydney. Thus, the institute could not be said to represent a significant influence on the promotion of science or medicine in Queensland.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Cilento and Lack, *Triumph in the tropics*, p. 435.

¹¹⁰ Lorraine Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", in Roy MacLeod and Donald Denoon, eds, *Health and healing in tropical Australia and Papua New Guinea* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1991), p. 36.

¹¹¹ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", pp. 41-2.

¹¹² Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", pp. 42-3.

¹¹³ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", p. 44.

¹¹⁴ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", pp. 44-5. After Breinl's retirement and before Cilento's appointment, there was a succession of directors, none of whom stayed long in the position.

¹¹⁵ This is also suggested by the fact during the 1920s, one of the reasons advanced for establishing a medical school in Brisbane was the opportunity it would give to examine the health issues raised by Queensland's tropical and sub-tropical climate. See P. R. Patrick, "Ernest James Goddard – a founding father", in M. John Thearle, ed., *People, places and pestilence: vignettes of Queensland's medical past* (Brisbane: Department of Child Health, University of Queensland, 1986), pp. 6-7.

Generally, the medical profession in Queensland was less organised and less influential than its southern counterpart, and the Queensland government did not place a high priority on health.¹¹⁶ There was no medical school in Queensland until 1935, despite agitation for the establishment of such a school dating back to 1874.¹¹⁷ Ernest J. Goddard was instrumental in renewing this campaign in the late 1920s, using his considerable skills as an organiser, and a previous connection with Premier W. Forgan Smith, to advocate the establishment of a medical school.¹¹⁸ An emphasis on financial stringency aided this endeavour, although it ultimately impeded the school's development.¹¹⁹ Finances were consistently low in the area of health policy in Queensland for most of the period between 1900 and 1950.¹²⁰ From 1915 to 1932, the only major health reform was the assignment of Golden Casket profits to public hospitals, in 1920.¹²¹ P. K. Jordan states that the Queensland Labor party was suspicious of private medical practitioners and the British Medical Association, because they were perceived as

¹¹⁶ Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", p. 11; W. Ross Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988), pp. 459-61.

¹¹⁷ Patrick, "Ernest James Goddard", p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", p. 10; Patrick, "Ernest James Goddard", pp. 7-9. Cilento, L. Jarvis Nye and John Bostock were also instrumental (Fisher, "The role of Sir Raphael Cilento in the founding and development of the faculty of medicine", p. 16).

¹¹⁹ Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", pp. 12-13.

¹²⁰ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 108; P. K. Jordan, "Health and social welfare", in Murphy, Joyce and Hughes, *Labor in power*, p. 312.

¹²¹ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 109; Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 78.

middle class.¹²² The government therefore paid little attention to reforms suggested by these medical practitioners. Neither various conservative coalition governments, from the beginning of the twentieth century to 1915, nor the Country National Progressive Party, from 1929 to 1932, displayed a noticeably greater interest in health policy than the Labor party, although these opposition parties had much less opportunity to do so.¹²³

Major reforms to the healthcare system were not introduced until 1932, when Edward Hanlon, the Labor Home Secretary, created a separate health portfolio in response to a campaign by the British Medical Association and the *Brisbane Courier*.¹²⁴ Most of these reforms did not come to fruition until well into the 1930s. There is evidence that during the late 1920s and 1930s, there was an increased interest in applied science and medicine in Queensland generally. In 1929, the *Queenslander* reported approvingly that:

Gradually but earnestly all the important problems are being embraced within the programme of scientific activities, and the impending formation of a Bureau of Economics should enable Australia to at last – and for the first time – attend in scientific and efficient manner to matters that fundamentally concern its destiny.¹²⁵

¹²² Jordan, "Health and social welfare", p. 316.

¹²³ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 109.

¹²⁴ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 112.

¹²⁵ "Science and economics", *Brisbane Courier*, 20 April 1929, p. 26.

The article went on to criticise a past “tendency to divorce science and scientific research from the practical everyday affairs of humanity.”¹²⁶ There were other indications of the widespread faith that science could aid humanity. The *Brisbane Courier* agreed with the statement of Professor Goddard to the Constitutional Club that the world’s problems should be dealt with “in a more scientific, truer, and calmer way”.¹²⁷ In 1938, the *Courier Mail* stated that the government finally appeared to be “learning what high dividends scientific research can pay the nation.”¹²⁸ In a draft of his essay entitled “Australia’s heritage”, Cilento stated that governments were becoming aware that:

... health is not merely the absence of disease, but a positive development of the best physical and mental perfections of which every individual is capable and that the health of every individual is an asset of the State and the Commonwealth as a whole.¹²⁹

In 1936, he asserted that society had reached a stage where it was acknowledged that the greatest asset of a state was the health of its people, and that therefore the greatest asset of its future was the health of its future citizens.¹³⁰ The increased interest in the benefits of applied science during the late 1920s and 1930s in Queensland were accompanied by evidence of growing concerns about racial fitness.

¹²⁶ “Science and economics”, *Brisbane Courier*, 20 April 1929, p. 26.

¹²⁷ “New solution: present day problems: scientific viewpoint”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

¹²⁸ “Youth and freedom”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 8 October 1938, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Cilento, “Australia’s heritage”, p. 7, UQFL MSS 44/45, Box 14, Fryer Library.

¹³⁰ Cilento, speech to the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, undated [1936], p. 1, UQFL MSS 44/90, Box 17, Fryer Library.

These factors must be considered in explaining the absence of a formal eugenics movement in Queensland. The circumstances discussed, however, indicate the presence of competing factors in the socio-economic and political situation in Queensland. These factors suggest that concerns about racial fitness were prevalent in the state in the first half of the twentieth century. The most significant factor in this argument is the extensive social control legislation introduced in Queensland during the nineteenth century.¹³¹ The demand for labour in the frontier society of nineteenth century Queensland was the primary rationalisation for this repressive legislation.¹³² In a society that had developed as both a penal colony and a frontier society, the virtues and rewards of industry were promoted forcefully, because hard work was an imperative for the survival not only of individuals, but of the community.¹³³ There was a strong philosophy in Queensland that it was a place of development, opportunity, success, and progress, and that anyone who could work would be successful.¹³⁴ Queensland newspapers and journals stressed the nobility of labour and promoted an industrious approach to life.¹³⁵ Those who “failed” to work, either through sickness or

¹³¹ For discussions of “problem” populations see Stanley Cohen, *Visions of social control: crime, punishment and classification* (New York: Polity Press, 1985), pp. 225-26; M. A. Crowther, “The later years of the workhouse 1890-1929”, in Pat Thane, ed. *The origins of British social policy* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 36-8, 42-3.

¹³² Michel Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 51-6; Foucault argued that the phenomenon of confinement in Europe was impelled by economic crisis and the need for labour; thus, idleness was identified as a source of vice.

¹³³ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, pp. 75, 94-5.

¹³⁴ Evans, “Keep white the strain”, p. 18; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 457.

¹³⁵ Evans, “Keep white the strain”, p. 18.

poverty, were regarded with suspicion.¹³⁶ Evans argues that antipathy to thus stigmatised groups “bordered at times upon open repugnance.”¹³⁷

Those groups considered to have failed included the drunk, poor, elderly, destitute, handicapped, and deranged.¹³⁸ The treatment of drunkards and prostitutes was unusually severe in Queensland, under the *Vagrancy Act*, the *Contagious Diseases Act* of 1868, and the *Inebriate Institutions Act* of 1896.¹³⁹ Alcohol and sexual licence were believed to be responsible for insanity and poverty, and also crime and prostitution.¹⁴⁰ The *Contagious Diseases Act* was modelled on the British Act of 1864, but Queensland was the first place to make the sanctions generally applicable to prostitutes throughout the civilian community.¹⁴¹ The *Vagrancy Act* was used to control the behaviour of prostitutes who did not co-operate with the police or who were a public nuisance.¹⁴²

In 1889, the *Queenslander* published an editorial on “Darwinism and the Aborigines”, an attack on those who held strict Darwinist beliefs. This article illustrated the extent of the stigmatisation of the “unfit” in

¹³⁶ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 76; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 457.

¹³⁷ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 84.

¹³⁸ Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 457.

¹³⁹ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, pp. 90-1.

¹⁴⁰ Raymond L. Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland government to 1919, MA thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1970, pp. 261, 267.

¹⁴¹ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, pp. 90-1.

¹⁴² Diane M. Perkins, Crime in the north-west 1925-1950, MA thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1993, p. 12. See also Mark Finnane, *Police and government: histories of policing in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 177-78.

Queensland during the nineteenth century. It summarised the views it was attacking as follows:

Our fostering of the weak, our preservation of the unfit, is a sin against the race. Infanticide, instead of being forbidden under penalty, should be made a matter of scientific regulation. The first sure symptom of insanity should be met by electrocution. The treatment of the criminal classes should be by the swiftest-known process of extermination. No method should be considered too severe to bring about such restriction of population in proportion to the means of subsistence as would conduce to the "fitness" of those most Darwinianly deserving to survive.¹⁴³

The *Queenslander* went on to counter such views, arguing that the theory of evolution dealt only with "*was and is, not ought or should*", and therefore no moral prescriptions could be extrapolated from it. It also argued that the strongest and most progressive nations were those who cared for their weakest members. The *Queenslander's* criticism of these ideas was strong. The fact that the newspaper considered this subject worthy of an editorial, combined with the force of its reply, suggests that these ideas were prevalent at this time. The article focused on these ideas as they were applied to Aboriginal people, but even taking into account the possibility that the *Queenslander* was exaggerating, it was obvious that those who espoused them considered them to have a broader scope. "Deviants" in Queensland were stigmatised as immoral, unfit, and degenerate, and similar attitudes were adopted towards the indigent,

¹⁴³ "Darwinism and the Aborigines", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 November 1889, p. 825.

irrational and unemployable as were held towards the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland.

This article therefore also illustrated the extent of racial tensions present in Queensland during the nineteenth century. Racial anxieties contributed to the popularity of eugenic ideas in various countries,¹⁴⁴ and were also present in Queensland. Evans argues that, at least in the prewar period, ethnic heterogeneity was more visible in Queensland than in any other state.¹⁴⁵ Cameron states that Queensland Labor was distinguished by a particularly “ruthless adherence to the White Australia Policy, and restricted immigration”.¹⁴⁶ Concerns about controlling the Aboriginal population of the state, and particularly preventing their sexual contact and breeding with white people were common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After 1897, Aboriginal people were removed to reserves, and thus practically sentenced to imprisonment for life.¹⁴⁷

It is possible that the existence of repressive legislation in Queensland prevented anxieties about “problem” populations from arising in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the same degree as they did

¹⁴⁴ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 250; Gotz Aly, Peter Chroust and Christian Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi medicine and racial hygiene* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 9, 13; Barker, “The biology of stupidity”, p. 360; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 132-31; Köhl, *The Nazi connection*, p. 28; O’Brien, “Protecting the social body”, pp. 190-91.

¹⁴⁵ Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁶ Cameron, An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, p. 34.

¹⁴⁷ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 93.

in other areas. Evans argues that the segregation of “deviants” in Queensland was so effective as to allow the perpetuation of the myth, heavily promoted in immigration propaganda, that pauperism did not exist in Queensland.¹⁴⁸ Mark Finnane argues that eugenics reinforced the role of segregation “as a penal option with significant social functions”, at a time when prison populations were declining.¹⁴⁹ In this sense, it might appear that eugenics would not be popular in Queensland, as there was less urgency in dealing with groups considered unfit. It can certainly be offered as a reason that eugenic ideology was less explicitly articulated in Queensland than elsewhere. The existence of this legislation, however, revealed fears of racial degeneration and stigmatisation of “deviants” that had much in common with eugenic beliefs. These attitudes towards the “unfit” did not change significantly in the twentieth century in Queensland.¹⁵⁰

Anxieties about racial fitness and degeneration also had a particular relevance in a state where the sub-tropical climate was generally considered highly unsuitable and potentially detrimental to the health of white people, and particularly white women and children, those who were said to carry the greatest burden of responsibility for the future of the race. The debate about this issue was linked to many concerns that

¹⁴⁸ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 84. See Cohen, *Visions of social control*, pp. 13, 57.

¹⁴⁹ Mark Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 99.

¹⁵⁰ Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 458.

touched on eugenics and ideas of racial fitness. As noted above, concern in Australia about the declining birth rate was linked to fears of Asian invasion, and these fears often concentrated on north Queensland.¹⁵¹ Settlement in the tropics has historically been very important to Queensland, as the north of the state was perceived to be vulnerable to invasion, not only because of its proximity to Asia, but also because of the potentially degenerating effect of its climate.¹⁵²

The economic, political and social structure of Queensland during the first half of the twentieth century was such that the traditional support bases of eugenics movements were not as strong in the state as they were in the rest of Australia and internationally. Thus, it is not surprising to find that no formal eugenics organisation ever existed in Queensland. An examination of Queensland politics and society at this time reveals, however, that other factors were present which contributed to a climate in which rhetoric about racial fitness and improving the race were in fact more widespread than in other states of Australia. This chapter now turns to an examination of eugenic ideology and ideas about racial fitness as they appeared in Queensland discourse. These ideas will be examined in the context of the international eugenics movement and

¹⁵¹ The perceived emptiness of north Australia was a factor in invasion fears: while almost half the land area of Queensland is tropical, the percentage of the population living in the tropical area of the state has never risen above twenty percent (Crossman, Bell, Jackson, Runciman, Elridge, Skinner and Western, *Migration, population growth and regional development in Queensland*, p. 55).

¹⁵² G. C. Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of north Queensland to 1920* ([Canberra]: Australian National University Press, 1970), p. vii; Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 4-5.

its successful use of propaganda. The controversy over the word *eugenics* itself, and the possible implications for Queensland will also be explored.

Eugenic ideology and racial fitness in Queensland

An examination of the economic, political and social situation in Queensland during the first half of the twentieth century reveals that concerns about racial fitness, which were a national preoccupation in Australia at this time, were, if anything, more pronounced in Queensland. Concerns about racial degeneration, and the relative influence of heredity and environment were usually present, even if implicitly, in debates about racial fitness. Use of the word *eugenics* was rare in Queensland newspapers between 1900 and 1950. This chapter now turns to an exploration of the connections between concerns about racial fitness and degeneration, the question of inherited and environmental influences on a population, and eugenic ideology. An analysis of these ideas reveals complex interactions, and demonstrates that such concerns were common in Queensland at this time.

It was in fears about degeneration, which were particularly prominent among the middle classes, that eugenicists found fertile ground for publicising their movement.¹⁵³ In contrast to discussions of racial fitness,

¹⁵³ Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, gender and social change in Britain since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 66-9; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 22; Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion: knowledge, gender and power in modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 63; Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, p. 513. See, for example, Samuel J. Holmes, *The trend of the race: a study of present tendencies in the biological development of civilized mankind* (New York:

concerns about racial degeneration tended to be less explicitly articulated in public discourse in Queensland during the early twentieth century. It is noticeable that articles about racial degeneration in Queensland newspapers at this time tended to be reports from other states or overseas, rather than feature articles or editorials on the situation in Queensland. This changed after the First World War, and by the 1930s there was a growing discourse on the subject of racial degeneration.

The question of hereditary and environmental influences was also central to eugenics, to the extent that several historians have seen this as the defining characteristic of the movement.¹⁵⁴ There is no doubt that eugenicists were primarily interested in heredity.¹⁵⁵ R. Ruggles Gates asserted in 1923 that most of the practical problems of eugenics centred around heredity, and that knowledge of inheritance was essential in any attempts to influence the future development of the human race.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, Gates argued that, "from a eugenic point of view", the importance of optimising the environment should also be

Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921). Holmes warned his readers that "Everywhere the nemesis of degeneracy hangs threateningly over the organic world" (pp. 4-5).

¹⁵⁴ Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia", pp. 199-212; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 14; Rodwell contends that much of the research into eugenics in Australia has focused on the debate over the relative influence of heredity and environment: "Lessons in eugenics from Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopedia*", *Education and Research Perspectives*, 24, 1 (1997), p. 96.

¹⁵⁵ Galton, "Eugenics", p. 38; Darwin, "Introduction", in *Problems in eugenics*. Darwin also argued that although environment was important, heredity was neglected in social policy, and thus should take priority for eugenicists ("Practical eugenics", *The Times* (London), 31 July 1912, p. 4). See also Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁶ R. Ruggles Gates, *Heredity and eugenics* (London: Constable, 1923), pp. 1-2.

acknowledged.¹⁵⁷ Davenport argued that heredity was central to eugenic discussion,¹⁵⁸ but did not discount environment completely.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the question of nature or nurture was important to eugenics, but eugenicists did not necessarily discount environmental influences.¹⁶⁰ Most eugenicists did, however, believe that a large range of character traits, or at least a predisposition to particular behaviours, could be inherited.¹⁶¹

An analysis of views in Queensland public debate on heredity and environment reveals that hereditary determinism was not widespread in the state before 1914.¹⁶² As with fears about racial degeneration, hereditary determinism was more visible in Queensland after World War I, increasing in the 1930s. By the 1940s, however, both these beliefs had dissipated, with debates about the potential of environmental influences becoming increasingly apparent. Nevertheless, concerns about racial fitness continued, albeit with a different focus. As Garton and Watts have

¹⁵⁷ Gates, *Heredity and eugenics*, p. 6. See also William Ernest Castle, John Merle Coulter, Charles Benedict Davenport, Edward Murray East and William Lawrence Tower, *Heredity and eugenics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912).

¹⁵⁸ Charles Benedict Davenport, *Heredity in relation to eugenics* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6. For similar arguments see Brown, "Economic welfare and racial vitality", pp. 16-18.

¹⁶⁰ Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 89. Some of those who were sympathetic to eugenic beliefs chose instead to focus on environmental reform because, as J. W. Springthorpe explained, it was "easier to influence our civilization than our germ plasm" (quoted in Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 177-78); see also Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 323. Interestingly, in 1912 Leonard Darwin made the converse argument, claiming that it was more possible to influence the heredity of future generations than the environment ("Practical eugenics", *The Times* (London), 31 July 1912, p. 4).

¹⁶¹ "The Eugenics Congress", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 7; Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 5-6. This was not confined to eugenicists; even some scientists who were critical of eugenics assumed that a large number of traits were inherited (Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, p. 123).

¹⁶² Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate", pp. 199-200, 209-11; Cawte, "Cranometry and eugenics", pp. 35-6; Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control", p. 73.

pointed out, it would be a mistake to attempt to define a period as being characterised solely by environmentalism or hereditarianism.¹⁶³ Rather, there was a dialogue between these two theories as explanations for behaviour. Although it is possible to suggest that certain ideas were more apparent at different periods, an examination of interactions between the two is essential to an understanding of Queensland society.

It has been demonstrated that the eugenics movement was widespread, yet controversial and ambiguous in its scope. In Queensland, most explicit references to the movement acknowledged this controversy. In 1910, one day after the *Week's* editorial on the "commercial value of life", quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the *Queenslander* made an explicit contribution to the debate on eugenics. In this instance, however, it was treated as a joke, even being published in the "Trivialities" section of the paper.¹⁶⁴ The article was entitled "The use of ancestors", and described the "new science" of eugenics. It then reported a speech on the subject, given by J. T. Bell at a merchants' picnic.¹⁶⁵ Bell stated that

... one of the chief features of [eugenics] is the tracing of hereditary influences which hitherto we have supposed were intimately associated with the soil and the products of soil – hereditary influences which we have thought belonged exclusively to horses and cattle and sheep, and to the animal kingdom generally – are really as much dominant in the human race as in any other.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 165-67; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 320.

¹⁶⁴ "The use of ancestors", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 9 April 1910, p. 32.

¹⁶⁵ Bell, a member of a prominent Queensland pastoral family, was the speaker in parliament; he had formerly worked in the Public Lands Department.

¹⁶⁶ "The use of ancestors", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 9 April 1910, p. 32.

Bell went on to relate, tongue in cheek, what he felt was the great advantage of this science: "that when I, for example, make a mistake – an exceptionally great mistake – I do not blame myself. I simply damn some one or other of my ancestors."¹⁶⁷ The *Queenslander* reported that this statement was followed by laughter. The idea that eugenicists wished to breed humans like animals was one of the major claims levelled against eugenics by its opponents.¹⁶⁸ It was also one of the justifications advanced by its supporters.¹⁶⁹ These criticisms were not, therefore, unique to Queensland, but suggest that eugenic ideas were conspicuous enough at this stage to warrant discussion and criticism.

The ambitious scope of eugenic ideas, as well as the reach of concerns about racial fitness, were apparent in the *Week's* 1910 editorial. This editorial also indicated the controversy surrounding eugenics. It advocated the adoption by the state of "the science of laying the foundations of a sound physical condition by attending to hereditary factors and influences."¹⁷⁰ The newspaper, however, appeared to be reluctant to use the word *eugenics*, although it was clear that it was this

¹⁶⁷ "The use of ancestors", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 9 April 1910, p. 32.

¹⁶⁸ See *The Times*, 18 May 1912, p. 12, a report of debate in British parliament over the Mental Deficiency Bill: Josiah Wedgwood (a staunch opponent of the legislation) argued that the bill was promoted entirely by "the horrible Eugenics Society, which had set out to breed up the working classes as though they were cattle, and whose sole object seemed to be to make mankind as perfect as poultry."

¹⁶⁹ For example, Brown, in "Economic welfare and racial vitality", p. 29, criticised the "popular superstition that while the mind of man can breed pigs, it cannot breed men". See also Gates, *Heredity and eugenics*, p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ "Commercial value of life", *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

“science” to which the article referred. The *Week* did not believe that this would be sufficient to improve the population, but made other recommendations. It argued that:

The most valuable asset of a country ... is found in the life of its citizens. Where this life is vigorous in physical stamina, quick and sane in intelligence; when it uninterruptedly brings natural increase of population, and impels men strenuously to engage in the rivalries and risks which underlie or accompany all civilising movements, it stands as the great factor in determining the progress and stability of the community.¹⁷¹

The editorial contended that both hereditary and environmental influences would improve the “vigour” of Queensland citizens. It encompassed issues of importance in Australia, and particularly Queensland, at this time, stating that:

The failure to maintain the natural increase of population at the normal rate points in the direction of national failure, and while immigration continues to be a mere matter of party policy, the situation assumes the aspect of life and death importance.¹⁷²

It further stated that individual members of a community should be kept “in a condition of fitness, without which efficiency is not to be expected.”¹⁷³ The belief in efficiency as the basis for a healthy society was widespread, and was another common idea that tended to be linked to ideas about racial fitness.¹⁷⁴ Efficiency was strongly linked to a belief

¹⁷¹ “Commercial value of life”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

¹⁷² “Commercial value of life”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

¹⁷³ “Commercial value of life”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

¹⁷⁴ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 256; Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘half-castes’”, p. 108; Damousi, “Modernism, socialism and communism”, p. 35; Grant Rodwell, “Persons of lax morality’: temperance, eugenics and education in Australia, 1900-30”, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 64 (2000), p. 62.

that the scientific management of everyday affairs would be beneficial to society.¹⁷⁵ It was also related to eugenics, in that many believed that an individual's worth was measured only in terms of his or her usefulness to society.¹⁷⁶ In such a social climate, the "necessitous" poor were sometimes viewed not as individuals but as a drain on already overtaxed resources.¹⁷⁷ The ultimate expression of this philosophy was of course the Nazi campaign against "life unworthy of life" in 1930s Germany.¹⁷⁸ Thus, a belief in efficiency had both positive and negative aspects; there was some criticism of the concept in Queensland.¹⁷⁹ On the positive side were statements such as the pronouncement of the *Queenslander* in 1920 that "Efficiency is the foundation of success."¹⁸⁰

The *Week* contended that the main factors that would contribute to efficiency were mental, and could only be fully present

... where a complete and up-to-date system of education has been established. ... The educating and physical training of the young must be prosecuted with earnestness and intelligence, if we are to

¹⁷⁵ See for example "Scientific management", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ Cawte, "Cranio-metry and eugenics", p. 38; Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", p. 9; White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 116.

¹⁷⁷ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁸ There is a large amount of literature on this movement. See, for example, Aly, Chroust and Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland*, pp. 1-17; and Michael Burleigh, "Psychiatry, German society and the Nazi 'euthanasia' programme", in *Ethics and extermination: reflections on Nazi genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 113-29.

¹⁷⁹ For example, in 1929, the Country News section of the *Brisbane Courier* reported that the Maleny Debating Society had held a debate on the subject: "Efficiency in modern industry – that it is not necessary for the progress of civilisation, and that it is too great a fetish in our present-day lives", with the affirmative winning (*Brisbane Courier*, 20 February 1929, p. 20).

¹⁸⁰ "The efficient woman", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 7. The article was reporting on a new club which had been formed for business women, which had taken as its aim the promotion of "greater efficiency and co-operation among established business and professional women."

reach and maintain the state of progress and efficiency necessary in order to keep our place in the van of civilised peoples.¹⁸¹

Thus, the *Week's* editorial was firmly in favour of efficiency, and promoted education as a way to achieve it. The reverse of this view, however, was that if an individual's worth to the state (or their "commercial value", as the *Week* saw it) was judged in terms of their efficiency, then those who failed to be efficient were not considered to be of value.

The range of topics covered in this editorial suggest the scope that was covered in discussions of racial improvement, among which was the "science" of eugenics. Queensland was certainly not unusual in these preoccupations, although concern with the increase of population through the birth-rate and immigration was of particular interest in the state.¹⁸² Perhaps the most significant aspect of this editorial is the fact that, although it touched on many aspects of Queensland society, ultimately, it returned to financial factors. The most desirable outcome presented was that every individual in Queensland would be contributing to the commercial value of the state.

This article may have been circumspect in regard to the use of the word *eugenics*, but it explicitly discussed the improvement of the race. In

¹⁸¹ "Commercial value of life", *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

¹⁸² Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 67.

contrast to this was an earlier article, published in the same newspaper and entitled "Race deterioration", which contained no editorial comment. This article reported on research carried out by Elkington during his time in Tasmania.¹⁸³ His extensive investigations of the Tasmanian population, carried out by a team of doctors, were related to physical deterioration.¹⁸⁴ The *Week* reported that these studies had "covered long periods, and proved that physical deterioration existed in Tasmania as well as in other older countries."¹⁸⁵ Although it had been anticipated that this research would prompt a national investigation into the subject of physical deterioration, with the Commonwealth statistician to analyse the results, Tasmania was the only state that ever completed such an inquiry. The *Week* appeared to disapprove of this lack of initiative, concluding the article by stating that:

In Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and Great Britain, very extensive researches have been made in this direction, and all have tended to show that physical deterioration, unless checked, is likely to become a very serious handicap in national development.¹⁸⁶

In 1914, the *Queenslander* reported on a meeting of the American Health Association, and in particular, a speech given by Dr. J. H. Kellogg.¹⁸⁷ Kellogg argued that "the human race was gradually becoming insane", and

¹⁸³ "Race deterioration", *Week* (Brisbane), 18 February 1910, p. 27.

¹⁸⁴ Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 96, 101.

¹⁸⁵ "Race deterioration", *Week* (Brisbane), 18 February 1910, p. 27.

¹⁸⁶ "Race deterioration", *Week* (Brisbane), 18 February 1910, p. 27.

¹⁸⁷ Horwitz states that John Kellogg was "the cereal king [from Battle Creek, Michigan] whose Race Betterment Foundation hosted eugenics conferences", in "Always with us", p. 319.

that “the cause of the high percentage of insanity was due to the enervating influences of modern civilisation, with its attendant luxury and also to the tendency to crowd into the big cities.”¹⁸⁸ This speech clearly focused on fears about racial degeneration, and the title the *Queenslander* gave to the article, “The race deteriorating”, emphasised this aspect. Both the *Week* and the *Queenslander* were clearly concerned with racial degeneration as much as with racial fitness. Such concerns, however, were not prominent in Queensland at this stage. The focus was more on positive steps that could be taken to improve the race.

This was apparent in a *Queenslander* article from 1914 on the Society for the Health of Women and Children, founded in 1907 by Dr. Truby King in New Zealand.¹⁸⁹ In spite of the *Queenslander*’s apparent distrust of eugenics in 1910, by 1914 it was promoting it as a practical and positive strategy. The *Queenslander* reported that the aim of this society was the improvement of “the care of the infant before birth and during the period of infancy”, described by the newspaper as “practical eugenics”.¹⁹⁰ The link to infant welfare was one made by many eugenics organisations.¹⁹¹ The suggestion in the article, and of course the assumption of eugenics,

¹⁸⁸ “The race deteriorating”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 April 1914, p. 3.

¹⁸⁹ Kerreen Reiger, *The disenchantment of the home: modernizing the Australian family 1880-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 195.

¹⁹⁰ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 April 1914, p. 6.

¹⁹¹ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, pp. 30-5; Marjatta Hietala, “From race hygiene to sterilization: the eugenics movement in Finland”, in Broberg and Roll-Hansen, *Eugenics and the welfare state*, p. 203; Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain, “Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and reproductive imperatives”, in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, eds, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), pp. 171-72.

was that the health of the present generation of children was not an end in itself, but only the beginning of the process of racial improvement. The *Queenslander* article further contended that “practical eugenics” comprised simply “an attempt to rear a strong and healthy race by constructive and not by restrictive means.”¹⁹²

The *Queenslander* clearly embraced this more “positive” version of eugenics, possibly influenced by recent efforts on the part of the Eugenics Education Society in England to promote eugenic beliefs as relevant to many aspects of society. In 1912, the *London Times* had published an article about the Eugenic Congress with the title “Practical eugenics”.¹⁹³ There is no way of knowing if this influenced the *Queenslander*, which never reported on the congress. It is worth noting, however, that a southern correspondent to the *Queenslander* stated in 1912, at the time the congress was being held in London, that “At the present time, ... the thoughtful of the land are turning their attention to eugenics”.¹⁹⁴

It is also worth noting that the *Queenslander*, influenced by King himself, formulated a definition of eugenics that encompassed strong environmental influences. Earlier in 1914, the newspaper reported that King had given a lecture on eugenics in which he attacked the tendency

¹⁹² *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 April 1914, p. 6.

¹⁹³ “Practical eugenics”, *The Times* (London), 31 July 1912, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 July 1912, p. 5.

of hygiene instruction to discount the importance of environment in favour of heredity, arguing that environment could “knock heredity into a cocked hat”.¹⁹⁵ King, the newspaper reported, had criticised hygiene instruction for tending “in the direction of an unhealthy fatalism and pessimism”, with the result that

... many people had come to think that no matter how much [sic] pains parents took to render themselves normal and healthy it was useless if no benefits would accrue to their offspring.¹⁹⁶

Most Queensland commentators focused on the importance of environmental influences, while arguing that people could possess a hereditary tendency to certain characteristics.¹⁹⁷ At this time, debate in Queensland clearly encompassed concerns about racial fitness and degeneration, and it was apparent that many factors were believed to affect these processes. It was also clear that even when these concerns clearly touched on areas of eugenic interest, there was a certain ambivalence in discussing eugenic ideology.

One of the only organisations in Queensland that overtly promoted eugenic ideas and measures at this time was the Modernist Association of Queensland. The president of the Modernist Association was Dr A. Jefferis Turner, who stated that members of the movement consisted of

¹⁹⁵ “Educating for motherhood: influence of environment”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 28 February 1914, p. 29.

¹⁹⁶ “Educating for motherhood”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 28 February 1914, p. 29.

¹⁹⁷ “Women and the left hand”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 25 January 1908, p. 7; *Week* (Brisbane), 18 February 1910, p. 27; “The great king”, *Week* (Brisbane), 20 May 1910, p. 18.

“Christians and Theosophists, Spiritualists and Rationalists, Sceptics, Agnostics and queer sorts of Dogmatists; and cranks of all sorts”.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the membership of this society did not represent a particularly influential section of Queensland society, although Turner himself was a prominent Brisbane physician.¹⁹⁹

A brief discussion of modernism is essential to an understanding of eugenics. Modernism in Australia has been discussed extensively by the historian Michael Roe, who links it with the American progressive movement, which had strong associations with eugenics.²⁰⁰ Modernists combined a belief in Romantic ideals with a great faith in science, a commitment to efficiency and a hatred of waste, beliefs that led them to an interest in the health of the community, which in turn led to concerns for racial welfare and thus to eugenics.²⁰¹ Stephen Garton has furthered Roe’s discussion of modernism, arguing that a “discourse of degeneration” and anxiety about the pace of change in modern society formed the basis of the movement.²⁰² Joy Damousi has also discussed the philosophy of modernism and its links to efficiency, particularly issues of national efficiency, which included eugenics and birth control.²⁰³ None of these historians, however, has discussed modernism

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty*, p. 26.

¹⁹⁹ Warwick Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness: science, health and racial destiny* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), p. 54.

²⁰⁰ Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 1. Roe uses the term “vitalism” interchangeably with modernism.

²⁰¹ Roe, *Nine Australian Progressives*, pp. 11-12, 14.

²⁰² Garton, “Sound minds and healthy bodies”, pp. 176-77.

²⁰³ Damousi, “Modernism, socialism and communism”, p. 35.

in Queensland. Raymond Evans has briefly canvassed modernist influence in the state, arguing that it was relatively minor.²⁰⁴

The Modernist Association of Queensland published two journals for some years during the 1910s, edited by its main spokesperson, Douglas Price. The two journals were the *Modernist*, published between 1912 and 1917, and the *Forerunner*, subtitled *A quarterly exposition of the message of modernism*, and published between 1914 and 1916. The association was concerned with reconciling spirituality and rationality. Contributions to both journals explicitly linked a modernist philosophy to eugenic ideas about heredity and racial fitness. The first issue of the *Forerunner* described eugenics as “a most important question about which none should remain ignorant”, and recommended a book on the subject by Edgar Schuster, a member of the Eugenics Education Society’s executive committee.²⁰⁵

In 1913, Turner wrote a relatively long article in the *Modernist* on “Eugenics”, stating that the character of the next generation was the responsibility of the present generation: “This is the moral basis of eugenics.”²⁰⁶ While Turner acknowledged that environmental reform could improve the next generation to some extent, he also argued that

²⁰⁴ Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty*, pp. 25-6.

²⁰⁵ *Forerunner*, 1 [1914], p. 3; Copy of invitation from Leonard Darwin, President, 7 May 1912, to Premier, New South Wales, copy forwarded to Chief Secretary, Brisbane, p. 9, in-letter 7200 of 1912, PRE/A407, Queensland State Archives. Schuster’s book was *Eugenics* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1912).

²⁰⁶ A. Jefferis Turner, “Eugenics”, *Modernist* 10 (October 1913), p. 2.

the results of such reform depended on the quality of the “raw material” of society. He defined eugenics as the “attempt to improve this raw material”.²⁰⁷ Turner’s approach to the subject reflected an idiosyncratic view of eugenics that was not simply derived from overseas ideas. Although he adopted the categories of positive, negative and preventive eugenics defined by C. W. Saleeby,²⁰⁸ he did not simply agree with Saleeby’s conclusions, stating that he did not believe that eugenics was yet a science. He discussed the analogy of the application of the laws of heredity to man as well as animals, only to reject it, stating that cattle were bred for the benefit of humans, rather than for what was best for themselves. “Nature’s method is eugenic”, according to Turner, while the cattle-breeders’ was not.

Turner stated that there was no knowledge of the exact method of breeding for general excellence in the race.²⁰⁹ Although he supported positive eugenic strategies, he did not believe that the state should enforce them, arguing that these matters were best left to individuals.²¹⁰ He had more faith in negative eugenic measures, because nature’s method was to improve stock “by killing off the weaklings”.²¹¹ Turner contended that although this seemed cruel, eliminating nature’s method, which he feared society was attempting to do, would be more cruel.

²⁰⁷ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 3.

²⁰⁸ See C. W. Saleeby, *The methods of race regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911).

²⁰⁹ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 4.

²¹⁰ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 5.

²¹¹ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 5.

Turner concluded that, "The greatest crime a man can commit is to wilfully and deliberately bring a diseased, crippled or imbecile child into the world."²¹²

Douglas Price was also a strong advocate of eugenics, and largely agreed with Turner's position on the subject. In 1916 Price stated in the *Forerunner* that an emphasis on good "stock" in families would be widely beneficial, as it would "show that a clean family record of usefulness and health was of real value", as well as introducing the subject of racial health into public discussion.²¹³ He concluded:

Surely we should do all we can to comprehend and assist nature in these matters, and to correct the errors which are commonly made. ... The real virtue of the unfit is that he shall not pass on his unfitness to others, and the means by which he avoids doing so are of entirely secondary importance.²¹⁴

Price also held somewhat eccentric views on the subject of heredity. In 1912, the *Modernist*, in an article probably written by Price, although not attributed directly, argued that although religious dogmas were not to be taken literally, many had practical parallels, even "horrible dogmas like that of PREDESTINATION", for:

... heredity is no dream, moral excellence is innate. Some families are all good, and others, alas, are mainly criminals and idiots. One day we will be wise enough to direct these matters, and to stop the wholesale propagation of crime.²¹⁵

²¹² Turner, "Eugenics", p. 8.

²¹³ Douglas Price, "Family pride", *Forerunner*, 8 (September 1916), p. 25.

²¹⁴ Price, "Family pride", p. 26.

²¹⁵ "Faith and theology", *Modernist*, 4 (October 1912), p. 10.

Such arguments would undoubtedly have played into the hands of those who regarded eugenicists as little better than religious zealots, as well as those, religious and otherwise, who despised eugenics for its pretensions to becoming an absolute doctrine.²¹⁶ The Queensland Modernist Association indeed saw science as having the potential to replace religion and traditional morality. One of the concomitants of this belief was the argument put forth by both Turner and Price that giving birth to “unfit” children was a crime, or a sin. In the *Forerunner*, Price condemned the “old threadbare idea” that every child born was special, an idea that he claimed allowed “the feeble-minded, the diseased and the criminal to reproduce their kind”, while “to suggest that this is wicked, and that the responsibility is ours, is to some people morally shocking.”²¹⁷ He argued for independent thought about moral questions, and stated that the “sciences of Biology, Heredity, Sociology, Eugenics are well nigh useless unless we can turn them into new moral ideals”.²¹⁸

To illustrate his point that morality, or, in his terminology, righteousness, had to adapt to the changed circumstances of the contemporary world, Price cited three cases in which he believed a new “righteousness” was evident, but had not been acknowledged by those

²¹⁶ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 236; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p.

6.

²¹⁷ Price, “Second-hand thought”, *Forerunner*, 1 [1914], p. 15.

²¹⁸ Price, “Second-hand thought”, p. 15.

who clung to a more traditional morality.²¹⁹ These three cases were as follows: an elderly man who killed his wife to save her pain, after a fall down the stairs left her badly injured; a woman who left her “diseased, drunken and dissolute” husband because she “couldn’t bear” to have him father children; and a man who stole from his employer to feed his starving child. It is interesting to note that the second example, bringing together eugenic thought about responsible reproduction and temperance was linked to a case of euthanasia as well as that of a man stealing to feed his child, and that all three were cited as examples of moral actions not recognised in their time.

The *Modernist* also published extracts from an unpublished novel which condemned alcoholism and its potential effects on the next generation. This story described a young child who, at four years old could neither walk nor talk, emphasising the amount of “hard-earned” money that had to be spent on its medical care.²²⁰ The child’s condition was represented as the result of its father’s alcoholism, although it was unclear whether it was congenital or inherited, a frequent issue of confusion for eugenicists.²²¹ The narrator lamented that, although it might seem “cruel”, “it would be far better for [the child] to die.”²²²

²¹⁹ Price, “Second-hand thought”, p. 16.

²²⁰ “Extracts from an unpublished novel, written by S. N. Hogg”, *Modernist*, 4 (October 1912), p. 15. This “unpublished novel” was to be entitled “The escape of an Imprisoned-one, or The king’s touch”; the entire extract was focused on promoting reading as a means of escape from degrading circumstances.

²²¹ Hall, *Sex, gender and social change*, p. 67; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 90-1.

²²² *Modernist*, 4 (October 1912), p. 15.

Both Turner and Price presented strongly eugenic arguments that, for the most part, were not simply derivative of overseas debate. Price also condemned the First World War for eugenic reasons, arguing that war was “an evil” that “kills off the fit and leaves the feeble to propagate the next generation.”²²³ His campaign against the war drew some attention to the association, but he failed to convert large numbers of people to his cause, and the membership of the association was never large.²²⁴ Thus, although the views of the Modernist Association are interesting with regard to links between beliefs about racial fitness and eugenics, they were not particularly influential.

It is true, however, that the First World War created a greater interest in the topics of racial fitness and deterioration internationally.²²⁵ Eugenic arguments were used on both sides of the debate about the war.²²⁶ Historians have noted that the number of Australian publications advocating eugenic legislation grew after the war, and that a number of eugenic organisations led by prominent doctors, academics, feminists

²²³ Price, “The war”, *Forerunner*, 1 [1914], p. 22.

²²⁴ Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty*, p. 26.

²²⁵ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 49; Doris Kaufmann, “Science as cultural practice: psychiatry in the First World War and Weimar Germany”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34, 1 (1999), p. 137; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 59; O’Brien, “Protecting the social body”, p. 194.

²²⁶ There is extensive literature on the debate over the eugenic or dysgenic effects of the war; see for example Nancy Leys Stepan, “Nature’s pruning hook’: war, race and evolution, 1914-1918”, in J. M. W. Bean, ed., *The political culture of modern Britain: studies in memory of Stephen Koss* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), pp. 129-48, and, for a response D. P. Crook, “Nature’s pruning hook?: war and evolution, 1890-1918: a response to Nancy Stepan”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 33, 3 (1987), pp. 237-32; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 62; Steen, *DNA and destiny*, p. 36.

and social reformers were formed at this time.²²⁷ An increase in concern for the fitness of the population in Queensland was also apparent by 1920. In this year, the *Queenslander* warned pessimistically that:

A nation robbed of its fit men is in a dangerous state. England lost the flower of her manhood in our great conflict with the enemy, and in November of last year there were 493, 000 disabled survivors back on our hands, an appalling number, already increased. This means further impoverishment of national virility ... we want to ensure a healthy coming race.²²⁸

The focus on the impact of disabled soldiers on the “virility” of the “coming race” spoke strongly of beliefs about inherited defects affecting the fitness of the population. This anxiety was perhaps somewhat mitigated by the statement, a month later, of the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies that “Queensland in the time of war had shown the virility of her people in the same way as every other branch of the British race.”²²⁹

An increased emphasis on heredity was apparent after the war. In 1920, the *Queenslander* addressed the question of whether eugenicists were right in claiming that criminals were born, or whether sociologists were more accurate in claiming that they were created by faulty environments.²³⁰ The newspaper concluded that, if “one of the most

²²⁷ Cawte, “Craniometry and eugenics”, p. 35; Damousi, “Modernism, socialism and communism”, p. 35; Garton, “Sound minds and healthy bodies”, p. 164; David Kirk and Karen Twigg, “Regulating Australian bodies: eugenics, anthropometrics and school medical inspection in Victoria, 1900-1940”, *History of Education Review*, 23, 1 (1994), pp. 32-3; Jones, “The master potter and the rejected pots”, pp. 321-22. These included the Victorian Eugenics Society and the New South Wales Racial Hygiene Association.

²²⁸ “Restoring the disabled”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 28 February 1920, p. 4.

²²⁹ “‘Queensland’ in Europe”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 March 1920, p. 26.

²³⁰ “Environment and heredity”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

appalling documents in man's strangely mixed dossier" could be believed, then both positions had merit. The "appalling" document referred to was R. L. Dugdale's study of the Juke family.²³¹ This study would initially seem to indicate that the position of eugenicists was correct, as so many of the family had a "tainted" inheritance. There were, however, several cases within the family where "environment overcame heredity."²³²

The article also discussed a recent sequel to the Juke study, written by C. B. Davenport, the Director of the Laboratory of Experimental Evolution at Cold Spring Harbor.²³³ Davenport had found that many children who, until recently would "have been classified with the Jukes as hopeless victims of heredity", were now "men in a world of men", as a result of the recognition of, and medical solutions to, environmental problems.²³⁴ The article finally concluded that "Heredity, environment, and disease produce criminals; these are the subjects the reformer must tackle."²³⁵ Thus, the article contended that a wide scope of social

²³¹ *The Jukes: a study in crime, pauperism, disease and heredity* (New York: Putnam's, 1877).

²³² "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6. In fact, Dugdale was particularly concerned with exploring interactions between environment and heredity, although researchers following him became increasingly concerned with the inheritance of "degeneracy" (Rafter, *White trash*, p. 9). See, for example, Anna Wendt Finlayson, *The Dack family: a study in hereditary lack of emotional control* (Cold Spring Harbor, New York: Eugenics Record Office Bulletin no. 15, 1916); Wilhelmine E. Key, *Heredity and social fitness: a study of differential mating in a Pennsylvania family* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1920).

²³³ Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", p. 226. This laboratory subsequently became the Eugenics Record Office.

²³⁴ "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

²³⁵ "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

problems were linked, and advocated a multi-faceted response, one which took both environmental and hereditary factors into account.²³⁶ Despite this, the article included the strongly hereditarian argument that “We cannot hope for crime elimination in any degree so long as society permits propagation by persons manifestly unfit.”²³⁷

As this article indicates, fears about racial degeneration, eugenics and heredity were often related to anxieties about crime. Eugenicists published extensively on crime, punishment and policing.²³⁸ Criminals were identified with the “unfit”, and commentators often argued that there was a link between crime and hereditary mental “deficiency”.²³⁹ In a 1900 work, W. McKim advocated sterilisation as the only remedy that could “hold back the advancing tide of disintegration” in society.²⁴⁰ He argued that with all the recent advances in criminology and science, it was amazing that there was still indecision as to how to deal with “that greatest of all practical problems – how to stem the ever-strengthening torrent of defective and criminal humanity.”²⁴¹ A 1903 book by W. A. Chapple, entitled *The fertility of the unfit*, argued that sterilisation of

²³⁶ Professional cooperation and coordination of responses to social problems were promoted by the eugenics movement. See Cawte, “Cranimetry and eugenics”, particularly pp. 41-3; Garton, “Sound minds and healthy bodies”, p. 180; Jones, “The master potter and the rejected pots”, pp. 326, 337.

²³⁷ “Environment and heredity”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

²³⁸ Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 68; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 91.

²³⁹ See, for example, “Eugenics and degeneration”, *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4; Brown, in “Economic welfare and racial vitality”, pp. 18-20.

²⁴⁰ W. Duncan McKim, *Heredity and human progress* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1900), p. iii.

²⁴¹ McKim, *Heredity and human progress*, p. iii.

criminals was “an absolute necessity” and the only way to prevent crime.²⁴² In the preface to this work, Rutherford Waddell claimed that civilisation was “in imminent peril of being swamped by the increasingly disproportionate progeny of the criminal.”²⁴³

Evans states that in colonial Queensland, insanity, poverty and crime were all attributed to idleness, various moral deficiencies, and alcohol.²⁴⁴ Thus, there was already harsh prejudice against these “useless” sections of the community, and as the twentieth century progressed, these conditions were increasingly identified with heredity. Criminals were considered to be degenerate individuals, with some theories literally considering them atavistic returns to more primitive man.²⁴⁵ In 1910, the *Week* reported on a New York murder case, in which the accused was described as having “a record of vicious degeneracy”.²⁴⁶ Of course, as this usage implies, degeneracy was often used as a synonym for criminality or brutality, or various other terms that simply implied deviance.²⁴⁷ This fact in itself indicates the prevalence of ideas of degeneration. In 1910,

²⁴² W. A. Chapple, *The fertility of the unfit* (Melbourne: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1903), pp. 124-27.

²⁴³ Rutherford Waddell, “Preface”, in *The fertility of the unfit*, p. iii.

²⁴⁴ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 81. Many eugenicists also campaigned for temperance: “The Eugenics Congress”, *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 7; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 97; Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied eugenics*, pp. 385-89; Rodwell, “Persons of lax morality”, p. 62.

²⁴⁵ Perkins, *Crime in the north-west*, p. 3.

²⁴⁶ “New York tragedy”, *Week* (Brisbane), 1 April 1910, p. 13.

²⁴⁷ Foucault stated that this usage became common during the nineteenth century, when a range of social problems were grouped together under the heading of degeneracy (in *The Foucault reader* (New York, Penguin Books, 1984), p. 150). See also Keith Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy and the welfare state c.1800-1993* (Keele, Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1995), pp. 139-48.

the *Week* discussed a recent judgment in France that would give “idiots” the vote, stating that the decision would probably “strike even the Socialist party as an extraordinary decision.”²⁴⁸ The paper concluded, however, that Australia had no right to be judgmental:

Publish in France the fact that gaol birds and paupers in Australia are permitted to vote for members of the Federal Parliament, and the people of France would shriek with laughter. Let us not grin at them.²⁴⁹

In 1912, the *Queenslander* stated that the criminal type had a “constitutional incapacity”, and that the “fully efficient citizen” could never be made from such material.²⁵⁰ Other sources perpetuated the idea that there was a link between the congenitally intellectually impaired and criminals. In several articles, Douglas Price appeared to conflate the categories of idiots or the “feeble-minded”, and criminals.²⁵¹ Turner also saw a link between criminality and inherited mental “defect”. He argued that male “imbeciles” would inevitably become criminals, and explicitly linked their criminality with their mental status, stating that they would always re-offend because they would always be imbeciles.²⁵² He urged the “careful segregation” of such people. Turner also argued that criminals should be divided into two classes, those who were capable of

²⁴⁸ *Week* (Brisbane), 22 April 1910, p. 19.

²⁴⁹ *Week* (Brisbane), 22 April 1910, p. 19.

²⁵⁰ “The criminal type”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 December 1912, p. 41.

²⁵¹ Price, “Second-hand thought”, p. 17, and “Faith or theology”, p. 10.

²⁵² Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 7.

reformation, and those who were innate criminals, with the second class permanently segregated from society.

Turner held similar attitudes towards the unemployed, or rather the group of people that he categorised as “unemployable”. He argued that “unemployables” should be segregated in labour colonies, where they would be taught to work, and released if they learnt this “lesson”.²⁵³ If not, Turner argued, they should remain in these colonies for the rest of their lives. Unemployment, and particularly those classed as “unemployables” were also a source of concern for the Queensland press, although there was no suggestion in popular sources that they should be segregated.²⁵⁴ Turner’s views echoed those of overseas commentators who advocated permanent segregation for both recidivist criminals and unemployables.²⁵⁵

The incidence of such concerns was doubtless an influence on the introduction of a Criminal Code Amendment Bill in Queensland in 1914. This bill provision for the indefinite detention of those designated as “habitual criminals”. The amendment, moved by Secretary for Public Instruction J. W. Blair, was specifically to make “provision for the detention and control of habitual criminals”, and allowed for the indefinite detention of prisoners after the expiration of their original

²⁵³ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 7.

²⁵⁴ “Unemployment”, *Week* (Brisbane), 10 June 1910, p. 15.

²⁵⁵ “Eugenics and degeneration”, *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4; “The feeble-minded: ‘incorrigibles’ and the law”, *The Times* (London), 13 April 1912, p. 4.

sentence in order to secure their reformation.²⁵⁶ The first reading of the bill did not occasion any comment.²⁵⁷ During the second reading, various theories of crime were discussed, including Garofalo's, characterised as a social theory of crime, and Lombroso's, described as a physical theory.²⁵⁸ Blair stated his own belief that punishment should serve as "retributive justice", while the protection of the state or the reformation of individuals were secondary to this aim. Despite Blair's personal beliefs, the government was anxious to use the best theories of experts to tackle the subject. Blair stated that habitual, or, as he put it, "hardened", criminals were one of the hardest categories to deal with, along with juvenile offenders. The amendment meant that someone could be declared a habitual criminal if they were convicted two or more times of certain offences. Their discharge would be conditional on their reformation, and would not occur automatically after a specified period. Blair also stated his preference for these "habitual criminals" to be segregated in special reformatory prisons, separate from ordinary prisoners.²⁵⁹

T. J. Ryan, the leader of the opposition Labor party, requested information on similar acts in other states. Blair did not have such information, although he said the amendment was similar to legislation currently in force in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Legislation targeted at habitual criminals was passed in most Australian

²⁵⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (6 October 1914), p. 1173.

²⁵⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (7 October 1914), p. 1207.

²⁵⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (8 October 1914), p. 1227.

²⁵⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (8 October 1914), p. 1228.

states, and in New Zealand, between 1905 and 1909.²⁶⁰ The severity of this legislation varied between jurisdictions, with New Zealand and Victoria having particularly strict provisions.²⁶¹ Ryan, although stating that he thought the legislation would work as a deterrent, called it a “very drastic” step, and hoped that the provision for indefinite detention would be amended in committee.²⁶² During the committee stage, the offences that would come under the provisions of the bill were tabled.²⁶³ These offences were numerous, and included various offences against morality; forgery; stealing, with or without violence; burglary; arson; receiving stolen property; fraud; and various offences under the Vagrants Act, including street betting. The death penalty was still present in Queensland in 1914 for murder.²⁶⁴

Finnane argues that although this legislation was introduced with the idea of reforming criminals, by the late 1920s, habitual criminals were more likely to be viewed as incapable of reformation.²⁶⁵ This was seen at its most extreme in Germany, where, in 1933, the National Socialist government passed legislation that provided for the sterilisation and

²⁶⁰ Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 78. See Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating born criminals* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), on the creation of “defective delinquent” criminals who were to be segregated for life; also Rafter, *Partial justice: women, prisons and social control* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), pp. 54, 66.

²⁶¹ Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 79.

²⁶² E. G. Theodore, a Labor member, expressed concern about the offences included in the provisions of the bill (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (13 October 1914), pp. 1278-79).

²⁶³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (13 October 1914), p. 1276.

²⁶⁴ In 1922, Queensland became the first state to abolish the death penalty (Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 136).

²⁶⁵ Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, pp. 79-80.

castration of "Dangerous Habitual Criminals".²⁶⁶ In Queensland, the amendment was not made use of during the 1910s. It is possible that the war made such concerns less urgent for a time. In his 1920 report as Comptroller-General of Prisons, A. T. Peirson mentioned this provision, stating that no-one had yet been charged under it.²⁶⁷ Peirson appeared to believe that habitual criminals could be reformed. By 1925, fifteen prisoners had been declared habitual criminals, and none had been released.²⁶⁸ Habitual criminals were given educational opportunities and special encouragement to pursue them.²⁶⁹

An examination of one person charged under this act reveals the general attitudes towards habitual criminals in Queensland. On the 18 August 1924, John Dennis was convicted of seven charges of housebreaking, sentenced to three years with hard labour, and declared to be a habitual criminal.²⁷⁰ An article published in the British periodical *Nineteenth Century*, entitled "The recidivist or habitual offender", by a J. E. Marshall, was enclosed with correspondence on Dennis's conviction. Marshall's statements reflected contemporary views on the subject of

²⁶⁶ Falk Ruttke, who was a lawyer, and a member of the S. S. and the Committee for Population and Race Policies in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, described this law as one of several which had been passed in Germany at this time which invoked a "knowledge of genetic laws" in order "to create a 'healthy race'" (Kühl, *The Nazi connection*, pp. 28-9).

²⁶⁷ T. Peirson, "Prisons Department – information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 241.

²⁶⁸ Peirson, "Prisons Department – information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December 1924", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1128.

²⁶⁹ Peirson, "Prisons Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1128.

²⁷⁰ Comptroller General of Prisons to Superintendent, H. M. Prison, 8 January 1931, in-letter 3319 of 1930, A/20033, Queensland State Archives.

habitual criminals. He drew associations between habitual criminality and insanity, mental weakness and imbecility.²⁷¹ Although he discussed economic considerations, he argued that people could be hereditarily predisposed to crime in the same way that they could be hereditarily predisposed to certain diseases. He advocated early treatment and education for this “particular group of deficient” before a “predisposition” became incurable.²⁷² At the same time, he stated that “We should eliminate the primitive element from among us and secure a higher degree of civilization to the community.”²⁷³

Despite its inclusion with this correspondence, the article does not appear to have influenced the treatment of habitual criminals in Queensland. Correspondence on Dennis during his stay in prison focused on environmental rather than congenital or hereditary factors. The superintendent of his prison stated that he could be reformed if his mother and brother would accept responsibility for his care. In recommending Dennis’ release, he also discussed Dennis’ increasing powers of self-control, and his chances of leading a useful and industrious life and abstaining from crime in the future.²⁷⁴ In 1929, Dennis successfully applied to be promoted to the Higher Grade of

²⁷¹ J. E. Marshall, “The recidivist or habitual offender”, *Nineteenth Century*, May (1920), pp. 904-15.

²⁷² Marshall, “The recidivist or habitual offender”, p. 910.

²⁷³ Marshall, “The recidivist or habitual offender”, p. 914.

²⁷⁴ Superintendent of His Majesty’s Prison to the Comptroller-General of Prisons, 24 November 1930, in-letter 3076 of 1930, A/20033, Queensland State Archives.

Habitual Criminals.²⁷⁵ He was released in 1931 on a good behaviour bond of £100, on the condition that he remained in Queensland and reported his address and occupation for two years.²⁷⁶ Between 1880 and 1940, environmentalism and hereditarianism were the two main theories used to determine the treatment of criminals.²⁷⁷ These theories were not mutually exclusive, but were often used in conjunction. By the late 1930s, however, environmentalist theories were becoming dominant, while theories that posited that crime was caused by innate hereditary taint were less popular.²⁷⁸

Although beliefs about hereditary determinism were not apparent in the treatment of this particular criminal, they were evident in public discourse during the 1920s. In 1929, the *Brisbane Courier* reported on a speech given by Goddard to the Constitutional Club. As with Goddard's statement on the application of science to problems, the *Courier* reported his opinions approvingly. The article also illustrates how heredity, evolution and natural selection were linked and applied to contemporary problems in the belief that these areas of science could provide answers. Goddard "interestingly" traced the laws of heredity, and "gave scientific

²⁷⁵ Comptroller General of Prisons to Superintendent of H. M. Prison, 1 November 1929, in-letter 2837 of 1929, A/20033, Queensland State Archives.

²⁷⁶ Comptroller General of Prisons to Superintendent, H. M. Prison, 8 January 1931, in-letter 3319 of 1930 and Deputy Superintendent, His Majesty's Prison to the Comptroller-General of Prisons, 9 January 1931, in-letter 73 of 1931, A/20033, Queensland State Archives.

²⁷⁷ Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 65.

²⁷⁸ Perkins, *Crime in the north-west*, p. 3.

reasons for the statement that man was born and not made.”²⁷⁹ Goddard, “taking evolution as the basis of his argument”, stated emphatically that “It has been definitely proved that Jack is not as good as his master ... in some cases he is much worse.”²⁸⁰ Goddard then discussed “the birth of the human race, and added that the origin of man from the lowest stock was generally conceded to-day.”²⁸¹ He concluded by saying that unless “the leaders of thought” accepted these scientific facts, “we can hope to get nowhere.”²⁸²

That heredity, evolution and natural selection were topics of both general and scientific debate was also apparent when the *Queenslander* published an article on natural selection in 1929. Although this article focused solely on natural selection in the plant and animal worlds, there is no doubt that its conclusions would not have been confined to scientific debate. The article acknowledged the controversy over evolution, but claimed that the “elimination of the unfit by natural selection is ... a biological axiom which is not controverted by any one”.²⁸³ A degree of dialogue between scientific and cultural concerns can be discerned from the statement that the “direct effect of environment on the individual is to-day engaging much attention within the domain of

²⁷⁹ “New solution: present day problems: scientific viewpoint”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

²⁸⁰ “New solution”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

²⁸¹ “New solution”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

²⁸² “New solution”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

²⁸³ “How is evolution effected?”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 June 1929, p. 24.

experimental evolution.”²⁸⁴ Whether or not this attention came more from scientific problems and transferred itself to cultural questions, or whether the question was suggested to scientists by contemporary problems in society would be difficult to discover, and is beside the point. The relevance of such a concern lies in the fact of its ubiquity at this time, in both scientific and cultural circles; in the fact that the relative importance of the environment on the individual (whether that individual was human, animal or plant) was considered a topic worth discussing. This point has been made by several historians. Hasian argues that biological debates were transferred to the public arena, allowing the claim to be made that nature, and not human will, dictated the ideal society.²⁸⁵ Many eugenicists believed that survival of the fittest and natural selection were essential doctrines, although many combined this with the conviction that, as W. Jethro Brown put it, “the operation of natural selection is, at the present time at any rate, far from satisfactory”, so that “rational selection” would have to “supplement” it.²⁸⁶ Debates over theories of evolution were social as well as scientific. They were linked to debates over the extent to which less fortunate members of society should be supported.

Increased concern with issues of racial fitness and heredity at this time was also apparent in Queensland parliament. Randolph Bedford, the

²⁸⁴ “How is evolution effected?”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 June 1929, p. 24.

²⁸⁵ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 20.

²⁸⁶ Brown, “Economic welfare and racial vitality”, p. 28.

Labor member for Warrego, was one of the most outspoken advocates of eugenic ideas and measures in Queensland. Bedford was an “ebullient, entrepreneurial Australian patriot” who believed whole-heartedly in racial purity and the value of the White Australia Policy.²⁸⁷ In 1929, he expounded in Queensland parliament on the subject of eugenics, stating that:

People who are shy on eugenics are so because of the mock modesty and mock respectability, which makes them believe that it is better to continue anything rather than for any tremendous radical change to be made; but the plucky courageous Government of the future will surely have to face the general teaching of eugenics to the people who are generally physically and mentally well balanced, and will also have to teach the duty of sterilising those who have absolutely no chance of taking any decent position in the world’s civilisation.²⁸⁸

Bedford’s discussion of eugenics acknowledged the controversy surrounding the word, and raised another reason for this controversy: the association of eugenic ideas with “taboo” topics related to sex.²⁸⁹ Bedford’s language was similar to that used by many commentators, who argued that truly brave governments would have to make some radical reform along eugenic lines.²⁹⁰ It is also noticeable that Bedford’s views on “negative” eugenic measures such as sterilisation were severe, in contrast to earlier views expressed in Queensland newspapers that favoured “positive” strategies of improving the population. As there was

²⁸⁷ Walker, *Anxious nation*, p. 83.

²⁸⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

²⁸⁹ Brown, for example, criticised a reluctance to discuss heredity as “a sort of prudery masking as morality” (“Economic welfare and racial vitality”, p. 29).

²⁹⁰ “The science of race building: eugenists in conference: morality and physical progress”, *The Times* (London), 26 July 1912, p. 4; “Eugenic reform”, *Age* (Melbourne), 6 January 1912, p. 5; Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. xi.

no reply to Bedford's speech, it is difficult to ascertain whether he received any support in parliament.

After 1930, there was an increased concern for racial fitness and degeneration in Queensland. This phenomenon was not unique to Queensland, but it is noticeable that debate in Queensland on these topics was almost entirely devoid of specific references to international circumstances.²⁹¹ One of the most influential individuals in this respect was Cilento, the director of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine from 1922.²⁹² In 1929, he became the Director of the Commonwealth Division of Tropical Hygiene, and in 1934 the Director-General of Health and Medical Services for Queensland.²⁹³ Cilento was a dynamic and efficient director, and exercised considerable influence on Edward Hanlon, the Minister for Health.²⁹⁴

Cilento had long-standing interests in improving the fitness of the white race, and in promoting white settlement in the tropics.²⁹⁵ These interests

²⁹¹ The obvious example is Germany (Aly, Chroust and Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland*, p. 3; Burleigh, *Ethics and extermination*, pp. 115-17). A growth in public support for eugenics in Denmark between 1929 and 1935 was related to a hardening of attitudes towards the poor and working class in the light of international economic circumstances (Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", pp. 44-6).

²⁹² Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 135-36.

²⁹³ Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 143.

²⁹⁴ Fisher, "The role of Sir Raphael Cilento in the founding and development of the faculty of medicine", pp. 16, 18.

²⁹⁵ Sir Raphael Cilento, "Orientations of the white working population of tropical Queensland", extract from *Health*, January and March 1926, pp. 16-17, UQFL MSS 44/124, Box 19, Fryer Library; "Australia's orientation", reprinted from the *Health Bulletin*, Department of Public Health, Victoria, July-December 1933, p. 24, UQFL MSS 44/113, Box 19, Fryer Library. See also Walker, *Anxious nation*, p. 150; A. T. Yarwood, "Sir Raphael Cilento and *The white man in the tropics*", in Macleod and Denoon, *Health and healing*, pp. 47-8.

were influenced by his beliefs about racial degeneration. In 1933, he was invited to give the annual Jackson Lecture. Due to his position, he was required to request permission to give this lecture, and to show the proposed draft to J. H. L. Cumpston, the head of the health department in Canberra.²⁹⁶ Cumpston replied that the department did not oppose his giving the lecture, but had some reservations about the content.²⁹⁷ One of these related to Cilento's statement that the birthrate was lower amongst the more intelligent. Cumpston pointed out that although this was a common assertion, there had not as yet been any evidence to support it.

Cilento appears to have followed Cumpston's advice. In the printed version of his lecture, he stated only that there was a marked lowering of the birthrate, adding that although it was claimed that it was worse among the intelligent and wealthy, there was no evidence of this.²⁹⁸ He further stated that it was "asserted, indeed (again without actual proof), that a rising tide of inferiority is submerging the progressive".²⁹⁹ Although Cilento phrased this in a way that indicated that these

²⁹⁶ Sir Raphael Cilento, Chief Quarantine Officer (General), Brisbane to J. H. L. Cumpston, Director-General of Health, Department of Health, Canberra, 28 August 1933, UQFL MSS 44/88, Box 17, Fryer Library.

²⁹⁷ Cumpston to Cilento, 31 August 1933, UQFL MSS 44/88, Box 17, Fryer Library. Cilento and Cumpston had frequent personal conflicts (Fisher, "The role of Sir Raphael Cilento in the founding and development of the faculty of medicine", p. 18; Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 143).

²⁹⁸ Sir Raphael Cilento, the Jackson Lecture: "Some medical aspects of racial resistance", *Medical Journal of Australia*, 16, 2, (October 1933), p. 511, UQFL MSS 44/130, Box 19, Fryer Library.

²⁹⁹ Cilento, "Some medical aspects of racial resistance", p. 511, UQFL MSS 44/130, Box 19, Fryer Library.

statements were not proven, he did argue that if they were true it would be a disaster for Australia. Three years after the publication of this lecture, Cilento wrote a speech for the Thirty Club in which he argued, although somewhat obliquely, that racial degeneration was a major problem in Australia.³⁰⁰

In a much later speech, he stated that since the 1940s he had held the view that it would become increasingly necessary for scientists “to ADVOCATE CONTROL OF HUMAN FERTILITY AND CONTROL OF THE RIGHT or the PERMISSION to have and rear children [emphasis in original].”³⁰¹ He believed that the possibilities created by advances in obstetrical technology made state control of fertility essential.³⁰² Although these views were not articulated until the 1960s, both their eugenic overtones, and Cilento’s statement that he had held them since the 1940s, make them worthy of note. In this speech, Cilento also criticised “the desire to preserve misfits to bolster ... the ego of the surgeon or any other of those who wished to ‘play God’ to the

³⁰⁰ Cilento, “Historical parallels”, an address read to the Thirty Club in the absence of Sir Raphael Cilento, 9 June 1936, p. 25, UQFL MSS 44/80, Box 17, Fryer Library. Cilento’s argument in this speech that the decline of modern civilisation was prefigured in the decline of previous great civilisations was common to many sources at this time. See *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20; *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 26 March 1910, p. 32; Brown, “Economic welfare and racial vitality”, p. 15; Raymond B. Cattell, *The fight for our national intelligence* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1937), p. 1; Galton, “Eugenics”, pp. 38-9; McKim, *Heredity and human progress*, p. iii.

³⁰¹ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, an address to the Combined Medical and Legal Associations of the Hunter River Valley – Cessnock, 11 March 1966, p. 5, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

³⁰² Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 7, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

handicapped.”³⁰³ He argued that the “preservation of misfits” was an anti-social tendency. He stated that there was no virtue in allowing, for example, two deaf-mutes to marry and reproduce in order to be briefly happy, but to “multiply children with a double possibility of continuing the same genetic handicap”.³⁰⁴ It was against nature to protect “physical and mental misfits”, and this “sloppy sentimentality” was sapping Australia’s claim to be a first rate nation.³⁰⁵ Cilento continued to espouse similar beliefs into the 1970s.³⁰⁶

Another instance revealing fears about racial degeneration in Queensland in the 1930s arose in a publication by two Brisbane psychiatrists, John Bostock and Leslie Nye. Bostock and Nye wrote a book entitled *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia’s national decline*.³⁰⁷ Bostock and Nye argued that the unfit were increasing, while Australia’s birth rate had declined by forty percent over the last twenty years.³⁰⁸ In view of Cilento’s attitudes on these subjects, it is ironic that part of the impetus for the book was to

³⁰³ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 8, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

³⁰⁴ Cilento’s sentiments were similar to those expressed fifty years earlier during debate over the British Mental Deficiency Bill (*The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12).

³⁰⁵ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 8, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

³⁰⁶ Cilento, “The predictable periodic revolts of youth”, an address to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 23 July 1970, UQFL MSS 44/84a, Box 17, Fryer Library.

³⁰⁷ Nye, as well as Cilento and Goddard, was involved in the campaign to establish a medical school in Queensland (Patrick, “Ernest James Goddard”, p. 9). Bostock was an English trained psychiatrist who came to Brisbane in 1927; like Nye he was active in the community (John Price, “Teaching in medical psychology and psychiatry: origins and developments”, in Doherty, *A medical school for Queensland*, p. 291).

³⁰⁸ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, pp. 2-3.

challenge Cilento's statement in the Jackson Lecture that there was no proof of racial degeneration or the differential birth-rate. Bostock and Nye identified three major factors in race suicide: the death and disability of potential fathers in war; the decline in the physical fertility of the race; and the move away from large families.³⁰⁹ They identified the use of birth control as the main factor limiting fertility, and, like earlier commentators, argued that selfish use of birth control by the "better" classes was the cause of "a rising tide of inferior humanity" that was "gradually submerging the better classes".³¹⁰

Bostock and Nye also used hereditary determinist arguments to dismiss the suggestion that the lower classes were only "lower" because of a lack of opportunity. These psychiatrists argued that the position of the working classes was due to a "lack of refined and disciplined inheritance, lack of education as apart from mere schooling, lack of self-control and of a highly developed brain".³¹¹ They went even further, explicitly stating that the inferiority of certain sections of society was "due to hereditary deficiencies aggravated by [an] undisciplined and unhygienic mode of life".³¹² They also used the argument, common in eugenic propaganda, that society as it was constituted protected these inferior types, and thus was acting against survival of the fittest.³¹³ Their conclusion was that

³⁰⁹ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. 4.

³¹⁰ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, pp. 6, 9. For examples of similar arguments see Brown, "Economic welfare and racial vitality", pp. 18-20.

³¹¹ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. 11.

³¹² Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. 13.

³¹³ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. 12.

“intelligent breeding” following hereditary principles was the only way to prevent “racial suicide”.³¹⁴

An increase of hereditary determinism and concerns about racial degeneration was marked in Queensland during the 1930s. In the years preceding the outbreak of World War II, there were also concerns expressed about the physical fitness of the nation. In 1938, Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Bjelke-Petersen, described in the *Courier Mail* as a leading Sydney physical training expert, stated that he would like to see a physical fitness campaign organised for Brisbane factory and office girls.³¹⁵ Concerns about women’s health were thus linked to their potential status as mothers, with the statement that women who had worked for six or seven years in offices or factories did not have the same qualifications for motherhood as women “living a more natural and active life”.³¹⁶ Bjelke-Petersen also played on anxieties about war and the fitness of Australians, arguing that “If war broke out, it would be found that Australian manhood, except for a keen minority, would be far behind that of prominent Continental countries in physical efficiency.”³¹⁷ A year later, V. H. Wallace wrote on behalf of the Eugenics Society of Victoria to the Eugenics Society in England, expressing the concern that,

³¹⁴ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. 13.

³¹⁵ “Fitness drive urged for working girls: ‘would benefit whole nation’”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 September 1938, p. 2.

³¹⁶ “Fitness drive urged for working girls”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 September 1938, p. 2.

³¹⁷ “Fitness drive urged for working girls”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 September 1938, p. 2.

with the outbreak of war, "everybody will be so concerned about the safety of the present generation that nobody will be interested in the welfare of future generations."³¹⁸ It is possible that Wallace's concerns were borne out, to a certain extent. Despite an increased concern with racial fitness during the 1930s, the outbreak of World War II did not occasion as great a debate over racial fitness as occurred at the time of World War I, perhaps because there was much less general debate over the morality or otherwise of this war compared to the 1914 war.

During the 1940s, concerns about racial fitness continued, but were now largely refocused on concerns about "national fitness", an international movement.³¹⁹ National fitness as a goal had a great deal in common with racial fitness, but was less explicitly linked to heredity and the future of the race, and tended to focus more on physical aspects of individual fitness; it was seen as a combination of physical and mental health.³²⁰ At the inaugural meeting of the National Health and Medical Research Council, held in 1937, resolutions were passed affecting tuberculosis, publicity, childhood hygiene, heart disease, prevention of blindness, dental research and leprosy.³²¹ In 1939, a national council for physical fitness was held at the Commonwealth Offices, and attended by Cilento

³¹⁸ V. H. Wallace, Eugenics Society of Victoria, Melbourne to Eugenics Society, London, 8 September 1939, SA/EUG Box 48, E3, Wellcome Institute Library, London.

³¹⁹ National co-ordinating council for physical fitness, Health 249, pp. 2, 9 January 1939, in-letter 783 of 1939, HHA/10, Queensland State Archives.

³²⁰ National co-ordinating council for physical fitness, pp. 4, 9 January 1939, in-letter 783 of 1939, HHA/10, Queensland State Archives.

³²¹ Memorandum from R. Cilento, Director-General of Health and Medical Services to Hanlon, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 11 February 1937, in-letter 7596 of 1937, A/31764, Queensland State Archives.

and Cumpston, among others.³²² H. S. Foll, the federal Minister for Health, made an introductory speech in which he stated that a campaign for national fitness was needed more at that time than at any other, as well as arguing that it was tied inseparably to defence.³²³ At the 1941 Labor in Politics Convention, issues that were identified as relating to national and individual fitness included the nationalisation of health services; the question of an income limit eligibility for child endowment; and instruction of the prevention and cure of “social” diseases.³²⁴ These were all questions that had been foregrounded by the eugenics movement, and were now reframed as questions of national fitness. Physical culture experts were increasingly visible, and their advice increasingly sought, in the 1940s, another aspect of the concern with physical and mental “fitness” which, it was believed, would be translated into national fitness.³²⁵ The National Fitness Council of Queensland was also concerned with issues of physical culture in national fitness.³²⁶

³²² National co-ordinating council for physical fitness, 9 January 1939, in-letter 783 of 1939, HHA/10, Queensland State Archives.

³²³ National co-ordinating council for physical fitness, pp. 2-3, 9 January 1939, in-letter 783 of 1939, HHA/10, Queensland State Archives.

³²⁴ Labor in Politics Convention, agenda, 17 February 1941, in-letter 1631 of 1941, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³²⁵ *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 16 January 1946, p. 5. The growth of the physical culture movement during the early twentieth century was linked to eugenic ideals of health (Robb, “Eugenics, spirituality and sex differentiation in Edwardian England”, p. 101).

³²⁶ Minute book, State Council for Physical Fitness (National Fitness Council of Queensland), 25 August 1939, A/72080, Queensland State Archives. See also the minutes of several meetings of the National Fitness Council of Queensland in A/72081, Queensland State Archives.

An examination of ideas about eugenics as they were expressed in discourse in Queensland between 1900 and 1950 reveals that explicit eugenic ideology was less visible than in other states of Australia or in other countries. The views on eugenics expressed by those within the Modernist Association of Queensland illustrate the influence of international eugenics movements, but also some concerns that were specific to Queensland society. They represent the most overt promotion of eugenics found in Queensland at this time. Although these views were only ever held by a minority, combined with discussions in Queensland newspapers, they indicate that eugenic ideology had some influence on discourse in Queensland prior to World War I. This influence, however, did not appear to have a significant impact on government policy during this period, as demonstrated by the lack of interest shown by Queensland governments of different political affiliations towards the attempted propaganda of the Eugenics Education Society, both before and after World War I.

During the 1920s and 1930s, ideas about racial fitness were more visible and more likely to focus on heredity, although, of course, discourse at this time was not uniform.³²⁷ By the 1940s, ideas about racial fitness were much less likely to be articulated in terms of heredity and the race. Such ideas had been discredited by their association with the extreme

³²⁷ Daley, "The strongman of eugenics", pp. 235-36; Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 165-67; Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy*, p. 127; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", pp. 320-23.

racial hygiene policies implemented in Nazi Germany.³²⁸ In Australia also, the association of eugenic ideas with the Nazi regime meant that these ideas were discredited, and were less likely to be openly discussed.³²⁹ Concerns about national fitness, however, were more prevalent than ever before, and encompassed many ideas that had been important to eugenicists and those concerned with racial fitness. Indeed, the focus on improving the physical and mental “fitness” of the population appeared to have echoes of the *Week*’s idea that eventually, every citizen would be contributing to the “commercial value of life”.³³⁰

³²⁸ C. P. Blacker, Eugenics Society, London to V. H. Wallace, Eugenics Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 1961, SA/EUG Box 48, E4, Wellcome Institute Library, London; Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, pp. 250-52; Clay and Leapman, *Master race*, p. 181; Dikötter, “Race culture”, p. 476; Gunnar Broberg and Mattias Tyden, “Eugenics in Sweden: efficient care”, p. 130, and Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark”, p. 61, both in Broberg and Roll-Hansen, *Eugenics and the welfare state*, p. 130; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 5.

³²⁹ Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture”, p. 319; White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 157.

³³⁰ “Commercial value of life”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 19.

Chapter Two

“What is to be done with them?”

Mentally “unfit” adults, eugenic ideology and racial fitness, 1900-29

In 1912, the *Truth*, a Brisbane daily newspaper, published an article about Lucy Tate, a woman who had recently appeared in the Brisbane Magistrates’ Court. The article described her as “one of a class of persons who are constantly being paraded before our magistrates in the Police Courts, where their strange antics and curious behaviour are always a source of merriment to the frequenters.”¹ Tate was further described as a “strange-looking creature with red hair”, and as having “as much mentality as a jackdaw”.² The article concluded that the magistrate had had no choice but to send her to prison, but argued there should be another option, “in this enlightened and humane country”, and made a direct appeal to the Home Secretary, asking “What is to be done with them Mr. Appel?”³ The Queensland government appeared to take this inquiry seriously. Following the article, it began an investigation into the

¹ “A penal problem: Lucy Tate trouble: swallowed half-sovereign”, *Truth* (Brisbane), newspaper clipping, date stamped 27 July 1912, in-letter 9503 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

² “A penal problem”, *Truth* (Brisbane), newspaper clipping, in-letter 9503 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

³ “A penal problem”, *Truth* (Brisbane), newspaper clipping, in-letter 9503 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

treatment and control of the "feeble-minded" in the rest of Australia, which it carried out over two years.

The concerns displayed in this article about Lucy Tate, and about others like her, were clearly concerns about public disturbance. It was her "strange antics and curious behaviour" that had led to her appearance in the magistrate's court. Nevertheless, both the original article, and the subsequent inquiries of the government, chose to focus on her mental status. It was her "deficient" mentality that was identified as the cause of her unmanageability. This problem was not focused on imminent threats to racial fitness, and no suggestion was made that Tate or others of "low" mentality should be prevented from reproducing. This article is representative of attitudes towards mental "defectives" in Queensland in the early 1900s. For the most part, concerns about these people were focused on their problematic behaviour, which, it was argued, was caused by their lack of intellectual ability. As the century progressed, however, concerns about the behaviour of these people increasingly resulted in suggestions that they should be segregated, both from the community and from those people who were diagnosed as mentally ill. This was a departure from previous views in Queensland, that had largely failed to distinguish between these two groups of people.

This chapter will examine debate about mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults in Queensland between 1900 and 1929. It is argued that

during this period, the distinction between these two groups gradually assumed a greater importance in the state. The latter group was increasingly believed to be associated with various social problems, and was increasingly identified as a threat to racial fitness. The chapter will first explore the differences in perception between the mentally "defective" and the mentally ill. In order to do this, it will examine the creation and definition of the category of "mental deficiency", and the various permutations and sub-categories of the term. The chapter will then examine the various problems that were claimed to be linked with both groups of people, but more specifically with mental "defectives". These problems centred around three main areas: the supposed disproportionate fecundity of the mentally "unfit"; the degeneration of racial fitness due to the inheritance of defects by their offspring; and the social problems that were linked to mental disorder by various experts.⁴ It will also discuss the solutions that were posited or implemented for the treatment and control of mental illness and mental deficiency, focusing on discussions about segregation and sterilisation. This debate occurred for the most part in public and professional discourse. Queensland governments placed a low priority on providing for the treatment and control of the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired before 1930.

⁴ This chapter will focus on adults, while children with a mental illness or an intellectual impairment will be discussed in Chapter Five.

During the late nineteenth century, there was a significant change in attitudes towards both the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired in Europe and America.⁵ This change was most clearly reflected in new scientific categories introduced to define and label them.⁶ An increase in the categorisation of mental disorders occurred in a climate of fears about racial degeneration.⁷ In such a climate, a theory that posited that mental disorders were biological abnormalities, transmitted in clear hereditary patterns, appeared to diminish the threat to racial fitness posed by mentally disordered adults.⁸ These people appeared less

⁵ Ian Dowbiggin, "Keeping this young country sane: C. K. Clarke, immigration restriction, and Canadian psychiatry, 1890-1925", *Canadian Historical Review*, 76 (1995), pp. 604-5; Gerald Grob, *The mad among us: a history of the care of America's mentally ill* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 159; Jose Harris, *Private lives, public spirit: a social history of Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1993), pp. 244-45; Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 506-7. This change in perception was related to a more general emphasis in psychiatry on the physical causes of mental illness; this led to a focus on hereditary factors: W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter and Michael Shepherd, *The anatomy of madness: essays in the history of psychiatry*, vol. 1 and 2 (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985); Ian R. Dowbiggin, *Inheriting madness: professionalization and psychiatric knowledge in nineteenth-century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Stephen Garton, "Freud and the psychiatrists: the Australian debate 1900 to 1940", in Brian Head and James Walter, eds, *Intellectual movements and Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 172-73; Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, p. 513; Michael H. Stone, *Healing the mind: a history of psychiatry from antiquity to the present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

⁶ Stephen Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of medicine in New South Wales, 1880-1940* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1988), pp. 58-9; Jan Goldstein, *Console and classify: the French psychiatric profession in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 45-6, 322; Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the rat was white: a historical view of psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 79-84; Daniel J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics: genetics and the uses of human heredity* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 76-8.

⁷ Carol Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women: the impact of scientific theories on attitudes towards women, 1870-1920", in Elizabeth Windschuttle, ed., *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on Australia 1888-1978* (Melbourne: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 133-36; Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, gender and social change in Britain since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 66-7; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 2-3.

⁸ David Barker, "The biology of stupidity: genetics, eugenics and mental deficiency in the inter-war years", *British Journal for the History of Science*, 22 (1989), p. 349;

threatening if they were perceived to be under scientific control, a perception that was indicative of a growing faith in science during this period.⁹ Categorisation was often combined with suggestions that many of the newly defined groups of people should be segregated.¹⁰ Many historians and theorists have explored the motivations behind the obsession with classifying and segregating certain groups of people.¹¹ The impulse towards classification, driven in part by concern over racial degeneration, was reflected in the categories developed at this time to classify the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired.

Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 23. This does not mean that there was complete consensus on the issue of the inheritability of mental deficiency: Harris, *Private lives, public spirit*, p. 57; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 148-50.

⁹ Garland E. Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, 1910-1940: an essay in institutional history", *Osiris*, 2nd series, 2 (1986), p. 264; Mary Cawte, "Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency", *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), pp. 37, 40; Michael Roe, *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought 1890-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp. 11, 14.

¹⁰ Mark Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 99-100; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1927-1977*, Colin Gordon, ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 166-68, and *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 24-8; Stephen Garton, "Bad or mad?: developments in incarceration in New South Wales 1880-1920", in Sydney Labour History Group, ed., *What rough beast?: the state and social order in Australian history* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 110.

¹¹ Foucault argued that the classification and confinement of the mentally ill was a self-generating phenomenon, rather than being primarily motivated by medical advances or humanitarian concerns: *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), see particularly pp. 221-22, 224, 227. See also Goldstein, *Console and classify*, pp. 5, 321. For more general examinations of an increasing tendency to classify and segregate "problem" groups during the late nineteenth century see: Stanley Cohen, *Visions of social control: crime, punishment and classification* (New York: Polity Press, 1985), p. 13; Raymond Evans, *Fighting words: writing about race* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), pp. 117-18; Lynette Finch, *The classing gaze: sexuality, class and surveillance* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993); Keith Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy and the welfare state* (Keele, Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1995), pp. 139-48.

In 1908, the British *Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded* was published. This report officially endorsed three types of mental "deficiency": idiots, imbeciles, and the feeble-minded.¹² Idiots and imbeciles were those who were obviously "incapable of managing themselves or their affairs, or, in the case of children, of being taught to do so", while the feeble-minded were

... persons in whose case there exists from birth or from an early age mental defectiveness not amounting to imbecility, yet so pronounced that they require care, supervision, and control for their own protection or for the protection of others, or, in the case of children, of receiving proper benefit from the instruction in ordinary schools.¹³

The commission was supported by the Royal College of Physicians, and the definitions were the result of cooperation with this organisation. These definitions later received further official sanction when they were adopted in the British *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1913. Edward Larson describes the definitions of mental deficiency authorised in this legislation as "remarkably broad".¹⁴

These definitions were defended by the British government on the grounds that they were provided by experts, that is physicians. Although

¹² "The feeble-minded: II. – proposed legislation", *The Times* (London), 16 May 1912, p. 6; "Care of the feeble-minded: definitions of defectives", *The Times* (London), 22 November 1912, p. 4; Barker, "The biology of stupidity", p. 349; Edward J. Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics: expert authority and the Mental Deficiency Bill", *British Journal for the History of Science*, 24, 80 (1991), p. 54; Edgar Schuster, (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1912), p. 171.

¹³ "Care of the feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 22 November 1912, p. 4.

¹⁴ Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics", p. 54.

particular clauses based on eugenic beliefs caused controversy,¹⁵ the definitions of mental "deficiency" endorsed by the Royal College of Physicians were adopted. These definitions were, for the most part, followed in Australia.¹⁶ When the federal government conducted a survey on mental deficiency in Australia from 1925 to 1929, the four categories that the commission adopted were those of idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons and moral deficient.¹⁷ In 1934, in the course of inquiries into the possibility of introducing legislation for the sterilisation of mental "defectives" in Britain, a committee of physicians argued that there were four categories of mental "defectives": idiots had a mental age of up to two, and comprised five percent of all defectives; imbeciles had a mental age of two to six, and comprised twenty percent of the total: idiots and imbeciles were sometimes referred to collectively as "low-grade defectives".¹⁸ The feeble-minded had a mental age of six to eight, comprised seventy-five percent of defectives, and were known as "high-

¹⁵ "The feeble-minded: ministerial proposals: a commission and local committees", *The Times* (London), 17 May 1912, p. 6; *The Times* (London), 18 May 1912, p. 12; *The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12; "Mental Deficiency Bill: measure to be dropped for the session: animated discussion", *The Times* (London), 20 November 1912, p. 6; "Care of the feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 22 November 1912, p. 4.

¹⁶ Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia", p. 209.

¹⁷ W. Ernest Jones, *Report on mental deficiency in the Commonwealth of Australia* (Canberra: Department of Health, 1929), p. 4.

¹⁸ Memorandum upon a Permissive Bill to legalise the Voluntary Sterilization of certain Mental Defectives, p. 1, enclosed with J. H. Thomas, Downing St to Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, Governor, Brisbane, circular despatch 32, 27 March 1934, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

grade defectives".¹⁹ It was the high grade mental defectives on whom most concern centred.²⁰

Feeble-mindedness was believed to be the most difficult category to diagnose, as idiocy and imbecility were believed to be more "obvious".²¹ It was argued that the feeble-minded could often pass for a "low grade normal type", and that the expert opinion of a psychiatrist was needed before a diagnosis could be conclusively established.²² Feeble-mindedness was also, due largely to the difficulty in identifying it, considered the greatest threat to racial fitness.²³ Some experts argued that the feeble-minded were more prone to immorality and more fecund than other types of mental "defective", and were more able to propagate as they were less easily identifiable.²⁴ The 1908 British commission was influential in publicising problems believed to be associated with mental "defectives".²⁵

¹⁹ Memorandum upon a Permissive Bill to legalise the Voluntary Sterilization of certain Mental Defectives, p. 1, enclosed with J. H. Thomas, Downing St to Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, Governor, Brisbane, circular despatch 32, 27 March 1934, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

²⁰ Barker, "The biology of stupidity", p. 349.

²¹ Garton, *Medicine and madness*, pp. 58-9; Ross Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots: eugenic legislation in Victoria, 1918-1939", 30, 113 (1999), pp. 330-32.

²² Rosemary Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness' in early twentieth-century New South Wales", in Jane Long, Jan Gothard and Helen Brash, eds, *Forging identities: bodies, gender and feminist history* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1997), p. 205. See also Schuster, who argued that idiots and imbeciles were less threatening than the feeble-minded because they were under greater control and thus less able to propagate (*Eugenics*, p. 172).

²³ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 4.

²⁴ Bacchi, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 202; Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 218; Stephen Garton, "Sir Charles Mackellar: psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), p. 28; G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain 1900-1914* (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976), p. 63. For examples see Schuster, *Eugenics*, p. 172; "The feeble-minded: I. - the problem", *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4.

²⁵ Carol Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 19, 75 (1980), p. 210; Barker, "The biology of stupidity", p. 349; Moira

It argued that the feeble-minded were implicated in almost every contemporary social problem in British society, and also that the threat they posed to the future of the race was extremely serious.²⁶ This belief was widespread by the early twentieth century, and was not confined to Britain.²⁷

Despite the emphasis on scientific classification of mental "defectives", in practice the various terms were often used indiscriminately. Rosemary Berreen argues that the term *feeble-minded* was often used interchangeably with the term *mental defective*.²⁸ Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry found that in the Tasmanian Department of State Children, the term *mental deficiency* was often used to describe or label behaviour that had little to do with mental capacity, and much more to do with deviant behaviour.²⁹ Gerald O'Brien, in a 1999 article on rhetoric directed at mental defectives, argued that:

The social perception at the beginning of the century of what was meant by feeble-mindedness was very cloudy ... The eugenicists understood, intuitively if not by means of rational thought, that they had a wonderful opportunity to not only identify what

Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding: the Mental Deficiency Bill in Western Australia, 1929", in Penelope Hetherington, ed., *Childhood and society in Western Australia* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988), p. 145.

²⁶ Barker, "The biology of stupidity", p. 349.

²⁷ "Problem" groups argued to be linked to feeble-mindedness at this time included the unemployable, criminals, prostitutes, drunkards and paupers: "The feeble-minded: an appeal to Parliament", *The Times* (London), 6 April 1912, p. 5; "Control of the feeble-minded: convicted persons, children and drunkards", *The Times* (London), 6 November 1912, p. 5; Anna Wendt Finlayson, *The Dack family: a study in hereditary lack of emotional control* (Cold Spring Harbor, New York: Eugenics Record Office Bulletin no. 15, 1916), pp. 40-1.

²⁸ Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 204.

²⁹ Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry, "Vessels of progressivism?: Tasmanian state girls and eugenics, 1900-1940", *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), p. 332.

feeble-mindedness was to the general public but to reify the "condition" in the first place.³⁰

This confusion is seen most clearly in the creation of the category of "moral defectives".

As has been seen, when categories of mental deficiency were being developed, many experts believed that a wide range of social problem groups would prove to be of low intelligence. Intelligence testing, however, often failed to reveal evidence of mental deficiency in members of these groups.³¹ In response, experts fell back on an older language of moral condemnation, arguing that if the mentality of such people was normal, it must be their morality that was deficient.³² Karl Pearson admitted that the feeble-minded were "not a special race, sharply differentiated from normal-minded folk", and that therefore tests of "moral judgment" were needed.³³ These attitudes led to the invention of a fourth category, that of moral defectives, to explain those who clearly had a high IQ, but were still unproductive members of society. Dr Stanley

³⁰ Gerald O'Brien, "Protecting the social body: use of the organism metaphor in fighting the 'menace of the feeble-minded'", *Mental Retardation*, 37, 3 (1999), p. 196.

³¹ Intelligence testing revealed sufficient evidence of mental deficiency in socially and racially "inferior" groups to confirm the prejudices of many experts, but the results, despite the supposedly scientific basis of the tests, were variable: Guthrie, *Even the rat was white*, pp. 84-5; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 78-80; Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 131.

³² Garton, "Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales", p. 28; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 52; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 63; Rob Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 40, 3 (1994), p. 325.

³³ Quoted in Howard Horwitz, "Always with us", *American Literary History*, 10, 2 (1998), p. 332.

Argyle, the Chief Secretary and Minister for Public Health in the Victorian Liberal government of the 1920s, described moral defectives as being sometimes "extraordinarily clever", but lacking in "moral sense".³⁴ Like the feeble-minded, and for similar reasons, moral defectives were considered a particular threat to racial fitness. They were difficult to identify and thus more likely to escape detection. This group was therefore seen as a major focus of psychiatric intervention and treatment.³⁵

In Queensland between 1900 and 1929, there was little interest in the almost obsessive classifying of mental deficiency that occurred elsewhere. No clear distinction was made between the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired.³⁶ General educational requirements in the state were relatively low, and many intellectually impaired people could fulfil useful manual roles, especially in rural areas. Despite this, it was possible for the intellectually impaired to be incarcerated for life in the same way as dangerous lunatics, as they were considered in the same category under the act.³⁷ In contrast, there was evidence that

³⁴ Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 331-32.

³⁵ This was connected with attempts at this time by the psychiatric profession to extend their range of influence on state policy (Stephen Garton, "The rise of the therapeutic state: psychiatry and the system of criminal jurisdiction in New South Wales, 1890-1940", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 32, 3 (1986), p. 381).

³⁶ Raymond L. Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government to 1919*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1970, p. 127-28: "Idiocy" was defined as a form of insanity under the *Insanity Act* of 1884, but the degree of "backwardness" that required institutionalisation was not determined.

³⁷ Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 129. Evans states that it was not only the hopeless cases which were found in asylums, but also many abandoned children, and those neglected children rejected by orphanages as too "backward".

distinctions between the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired were made in public and professional debate. In 1920, the *Queenslander* quoted a definition of feeble-mindedness, given by C. B. Davenport, the founder of the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor. Davenport described the feeble-minded as being:

... mentally incapable of responding normally to the expectations of society, brought up under faulty conditions which they consider normal, satisfied with the fulfillment of natural passions and desires, and with no ambitions or ideals in life.³⁸

There was no editorial comment on this sweeping definition. An examination of the language that was used during this period to describe mentally ill and mentally "defective" adults indicates the influence of ideas about racial fitness. The language used in debates about the mentally ill and the mentally defective also revealed that economic factors were significant in the discussion of the problems supposedly linked to these conditions. Although most debates appeared to be focused on what was beneficial for these people, it was clear that financial considerations were also important.³⁹

At the end of the nineteenth century, the mentally ill and the mentally deficient began to attract attention as an immediate, if vaguely defined, threat. By the early twentieth century, with the eugenics movement

³⁸ Davenport quoted in "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

³⁹ Foucault contended that the "great confinement" of various groups that he identified as occurring in the seventeenth century was linked to economic crisis and the need for labour, and that, in many cases, what was presented as benevolence towards the ill was in fact condemnation of idleness (*Madness and civilization*, pp. 46-9).

entering the era of its greatest popularity, concerns about mental disorders had become focused on the imminent danger to racial fitness which they were now supposed to represent. Eugenics organisations particularly targeted mental "defectives".⁴⁰ The principal cause of eugenic concern during the early twentieth century was the fear that mental "defectives" and, to a lesser extent, the mentally ill, were swamping civilised countries with defective offspring, and thereby causing a degradation in racial fitness.⁴¹ The ideas of the differential reproduction rate and the hereditary transmission of mental disorder, heavily publicised by eugenicists, were the main sources of this concern.⁴² It was also related to the belief that the sexual behaviour of mental "defectives", and particularly "feeble-minded" women, was promiscuous and uncontrolled.⁴³

Mental defectives and the insane were also implicated in many other problems facing industrial societies. Both conditions were believed to be

⁴⁰ "Practical eugenics", *The Times* (London), 31 July 1912, p. 4; O'Brien, "Protecting the social body", p. 192.

⁴¹ A 1912 editorial in the *Age* stated that it was "a curious biological fact that the feeble-minded man or woman is the most fertile of all parents", and that the propagation of mental "defectives" was producing racial deterioration which was a "menace" to the nation (*Age* (Melbourne), 29 July 1912, p. 6).

⁴² "Heredity and destitution", *The Times* (London), 3 June 1911, p. 7; "Mental Deficiency Bill", *The Times* (London), 2 December 1912, p. 3; Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), pp. 86-7.

⁴³ Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial justice: women, prisons and social control* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), pp. 68-9. During debate over the Mental Deficiency Bill in British parliament in 1912, Lord Cecil identified three "evils" as resulting from "feeble-mindedness": one was criminality; the second was that "feeble-minded" women, who were not themselves criminals, would give birth to illegitimate children; the third, clearly stemming from the first two, was racial degeneration (*The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12).

linked to criminal activity.⁴⁴ Various experts, many of them psychiatrists, also argued that mental disturbances were linked with social problems such as delinquency and poverty, thus redefining these social issues as medical problems.⁴⁵ Alcoholism and prostitution were other social problems that experts frequently claimed were associated with mental "deficiency".⁴⁶ These fears encompassed both those seen as mentally ill and those classified as mentally "defective", but the latter group was specifically targeted more often.⁴⁷ Although commentators on these concerns usually professed concern for the welfare of the mentally disturbed, the debates generally revealed that economic fears were also present.⁴⁸

Between 1900 and 1929, the proposed solution to the "problem" of mental "defectives" that appeared most likely to be implemented in

⁴⁴ "Race betterment", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 16 January 1914, p. 11; William Ernest Castle, John Merle Coulter, Charles Benedict Davenport, Edward Murray East and William Lawrence Tower, *Heredity and eugenics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), pp. 282-83, 286-87; Cawte, "Cranimetry and eugenics in Australia", p. 40; Ellis, *The problem of race regeneration*, pp. 67-8; Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 68; Karl Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics* 2nd ed. (London: Dulau, 1909), p. 37. In 1911, Dr Max G. Schlapp, a psychiatrist who specialised in juvenile delinquency, told the *New York Times* that feeble-mindedness was largely responsible for an increase in crime ("Feeble-minded children who drift into crime", *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14).

⁴⁵ "The prevention of destitution: medical overlapping", *The Times* (London), 3 June 1911, p. 7; "Mentally defective children: an important investigation: scheme for special education", *Age* (Melbourne), 29 July 1912, p. 6; Garton, "Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales", p. 26, and *Medicine and madness*, p. 78.

⁴⁶ Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Introduction", in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁷ Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating born criminals* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 7.

⁴⁸ "The feeble-minded: an appeal to Parliament", *The Times* (London), 6 April 1912, p. 5; "The feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4; *The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12; "The next Education Bill: need of reorganized finance", *The Times* (London), 19 November 1912, p. 6.

Britain and Australia was that of the segregation of mental defectives.⁴⁹ Segregation of the mentally "unfit" was supported by the English Eugenics Education Society.⁵⁰ Segregation was also supported for environmental reasons. It was argued that the environment of the mentally "unfit" could be influenced for the good, and if this failed, they were still prevented from reproducing.⁵¹ The first piece of legislation passed in Australia that was targeted at the treatment and control of mental "defectives" was the Tasmanian *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1920.⁵² This act was based almost entirely on the English *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1913, but it was an entirely new act for Tasmania.⁵³ As with the English act, the Tasmanian act provided for the segregation of mental "defectives".

Prior to 1930, there was little support for the sterilisation of any categories of the mentally "unfit" in mainstream debate in Australia or

⁴⁹ Garton, *Medicine and madness*, p. 77, and "Bad or mad?", p. 110; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 93.

⁵⁰ In 1911, Major Leonard Darwin, the president of the society, argued that segregation of the feeble-minded was the most pressing problem facing eugenicists: "Improvement of the race: disease as an aid to 'natural selection'", *The Times* (London), 2 June 1911, p. 6. See also "The Eugenics Congress", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 7.

⁵¹ "Improvement of the race", *The Times* (London), 2 June 1911, p. 6; "The Eugenics Congress", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 7; Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 220; Rafter, *Creating born criminals*, p. 7.

⁵² Stephen Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies: re-considering eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940", *Australian Historical Studies*, 103, (1993), p. 168. Wyndham has disputed this description of the Tasmanian bill, arguing that it was not eugenic because it did not distinguish between mental defectives and the insane (Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness: eugenics in Australia, 1910s to 1930s*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1996, p. 318). Whether or not the act was eugenic in intent or practice, it seems clear that it *did* distinguish between these two categories of mental disorder.

⁵³ Evans and Parry, "Vessels of progressivism?", p. 325.

Britain.⁵⁴ There is evidence, however, that by the late 1920s this situation was changing. In Victoria, two bills containing provisions for the voluntary sterilisation of mental "defectives" were considered in parliament, in 1926 and 1929.⁵⁵ These bills were promoted by an influential group of professionals with eugenic leanings.⁵⁶ In Western Australia, a bill that contained similar provisions was nearly passed by parliament in 1929.⁵⁷ Moira Fitzpatrick argues that there was significant support in Western Australia for the eugenic sterilisation of the feeble-minded, and that this support came from professional experts and members of parliament.⁵⁸ Garton asserts that the Commonwealth Department of Health considered action on similar lines.⁵⁹ Ultimately, no legislation was passed in either of these states, or at a federal level. The Western Australian bill was dropped for a variety of reasons, including a reluctance to spend money on mental "defectives".⁶⁰ Similar reasons were evident in the failure of the Victorian bills.⁶¹ In Britain, a sterilisation bill drafted in response to the Brock Report was delayed because of opposition from the Catholic Church and the Labour Party.⁶²

⁵⁴ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 181; Milton Lewis, *Managing madness: psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), p. 129; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, pp. 93-5.

⁵⁵ Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 328.

⁵⁶ Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 324-25.

⁵⁷ Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 144-60.

⁵⁸ Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 150-55.

⁵⁹ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 164.

⁶⁰ Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 155-56.

⁶¹ Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 338.

⁶² Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness*, p. 314.

In Queensland, mental "defectives" were not seen as a group distinct from the mentally ill. Both groups were treated extremely harshly, and were neglected in government policy.⁶³ In general debate, the links between low mentality, crime, promiscuity and illegitimate children were readily drawn.⁶⁴ Thus, although the classification of mental "defectives" that was central to eugenic argument elsewhere was not apparent in Queensland, prevalent concerns about racial fitness and degeneration in the state meant that similar fears about this group were present in the nineteenth century. There was no legislation that was aimed at mental "defectives" separately from the mentally ill before 1930. Mentally ill adults were already segregated, but no official attempts were made to further classify them into various grades of mental deficiency. This was no doubt partly due to the low priority that Queensland governments placed on health spending generally at this time.⁶⁵ In 1910, Brennan stated that he believed the Queensland government to be very generous in its spending on "hospitals and kindred institutions", and in this year the Goodna Hospital for the Insane was upgraded in 1910, at a cost of

⁶³ Raymond Evans, "The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland", in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), pp. 80-2; Ross Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1987), pp. 32-3, 45-8.

⁶⁴ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 129.

⁶⁵ P. K. Jordan, "Health and social welfare", in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, eds, *Labor in power: the Labor party and governments in Queensland 1915-57* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 312; Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), pp. 108-12. See also John Bostock and L. Jarvis Nye, *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's national decline* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934), pp. 7-8, for an example of attitudes towards government funding of health care; and *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 91 (7 October 1903), p. 640, for criticism of government expenditure on health care.

£2000.⁶⁶ Despite this, health was generally not a priority for Queensland governments, and mental health was a particularly neglected area.⁶⁷

By the early twentieth century, however, circumstances were apparent in Queensland that would eventually lead to a change in attitude towards the mentally "defective". At this time, there was concern about the number of inmates in asylums in Queensland. The size of the population in insane asylums was a cause for international concern at this time, and was one of the circumstances that led to an acceptance of eugenics.⁶⁸ In 1903, the new premier, Arthur Morgan, expressed his regret that the problem of insanity seemed to be continuing to grow, and stated his belief that there were too many patients at Goodna Asylum.⁶⁹ The report of the Inspector of Asylums for the Insane, James B. Hogg,⁷⁰ for 1903 reveals that there were 1852 patients in state institutions for the insane at the end of the year.⁷¹ This meant that, of an estimated population of 515 530, 3.59 out of every 1000 Queenslanders were in

⁶⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 105 (7 September 1910), p. 842. Brennan included among these: hospitals and charitable institutions (£95 242), industrial and reformatory schools (£5006), health department (£7881), inebriates asylum (£1390), hospitals for the insane (£61 869), the lazaret (£4640), lock hospitals (£300), medical officers (£2640), orphanages (£33 801) – a total of £221 867. For the upgrade to Goodna see *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 January 1910, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Jordan, "Health and social welfare", pp. 320.

⁶⁸ Gotz Aly, Peter Chroust and Christian Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi medicine and racial hygiene* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 17; Garton, "Freud and the psychiatrists", p. 171; Grob, *The mad among us*, pp. 140-41; Roy Porter, *A social history of madness: stories of the insane* (London: Phoenix Giants, 1987), p. 20.

⁶⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 91 (2 September 1903), pp. 457-58.

⁷⁰ Hogg was appointed as the superintendent of the new asylum at Toowoomba in 1890, and was transferred to Goodna in 1898, after the death of the previous Inspector of Asylums (Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, pp. 127-28).

⁷¹ James B. Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1903", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1904), p. 693.

state institutions during 1903. Hogg stated that this was an increase on previous years, adding that the proportion of the insane to the general population had "been slowly but steadily rising in all the States", and in New Zealand.⁷²

Hogg, however, did not attempt to increase any sense of crisis that might be interpreted from these statistics. In later reports, he specifically addressed these concerns, perhaps as the result of inquiries from the government, and seemingly downplayed them. In his report for 1905, Hogg stressed that the apparent increase in the number of patients in hospitals was due to the "accumulation in the hospitals of incurable cases", but not to an increase in insanity in the general community.⁷³ Despite a sudden increase in the proportion of the population admitted as patients, Hogg emphasised that this did not represent an alarming rise in insanity, but rather a normal variation in the rates of incidence of mental disturbance.⁷⁴ He made much the same arguments the following year when the rise in patients and admissions again showed a large increase.⁷⁵ Although Hogg acknowledged an increase in the population of insane asylums, he did not attribute this to the degeneration of the mental health of the general population. He attributed it to the

⁷² Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1903", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1904), p. 693.

⁷³ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1905", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1906), p. 1491.

⁷⁴ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1905", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1906), p. 1492.

⁷⁵ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1906", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1907), p. 7.

increasing number of "incurables" in the asylums, but he did not make any suggestions about solutions to this problem.

Furthermore, in his discussion of the causes of insanity, Hogg did not place any special emphasis on heredity, which he treated as one cause among many, and not a particularly important one. For example, in his report for 1903, he found that hereditary factors were responsible for thirty-two cases of insanity, out of a total of 337 patients admitted during the year.⁷⁶ In 1906, he estimated that just over fifteen percent of cases admitting during the preceding year were due to hereditary causes.⁷⁷ He also appeared uninterested in the category of congenital mental defect, and occasionally used the phrase "mental defect", or a variation, indiscriminately, to apply to all forms of mental disturbance.⁷⁸ Hogg's lack of interest in classifying the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired was typical of Queensland debate about these groups of people at this time. After Hogg died in 1908, however, this situation changed.⁷⁹ Statistics on the population of mentally disturbed adults were relatively objective, but the significance attached to them could vary immensely.

⁷⁶ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1903", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1904), p. 694. As a basis for comparison, other causes included excessive use of alcohol in sixty, previous attacks in thirty-nine, some disease of the skull or brain in fifteen, epilepsy in twenty-one, syphilis in eleven, and congenital mental defect in six. Causes were unclear in ninety-three cases.

⁷⁷ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1905", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1906), p. 1492.

⁷⁸ For example, in "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1906", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1907), p. 8.

⁷⁹ Patrick describes him as a "conscientious" Inspector of Asylums (*A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 128).

After Hogg's death, twenty-seven applications were received for the vacant position of Inspector of Asylums.⁸⁰ The increase in the number of patients led to the decision to appoint one person in the dual capacity of Inspector of Asylums and Medical Superintendent of Goodna Asylum.⁸¹ This position was filled by the London-educated psychiatrist H. Byam Ellerton, who commenced his duties in May 1909.⁸² A difference in focus between Ellerton and Hogg was apparent from Ellerton's first annual report. Ellerton placed a much greater emphasis on hereditary factors as a cause of mental disturbance. In his first few years as Inspector of Asylums, Ellerton failed to find a substantial number of cases in which heredity was the definite predetermining cause of insanity. He refused, however, to let statistics stand in the way of his beliefs. In his report for 1909, he could only cite twenty-two cases out of 310 admissions where he could conclusively state that hereditary factors were the major cause of insanity. Despite this, he maintained that the real figure was doubtless much higher than the recorded one, stating that relatives were likely to suppress the relevant information through fear or ignorance.⁸³

The following year, Ellerton again complained of the difficulty of ascertaining full particulars of family histories, blaming it on the

⁸⁰ Chief Secretary to Home Secretary, 10 December 1908, in-letter 13784 of 1908, A/31767, Queensland State Archives.

⁸¹ 19 November 1908, in-letter 13018 of 1908, A/31767, Queensland State Archives.

⁸² Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 128.

⁸³ H. Byam Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1909", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1910), p. 657.

reluctance to disclose "any family history or taint of insanity", as well as ignorance in recognising the alcoholic indulgence of parents as a factor.⁸⁴ Although he could only ascertain hereditary factors as a defining cause in eighteen cases, Ellerton stated that he was "far from believing [this number] to be correct".⁸⁵ In 1917, he reiterated that the numbers for heredity as a leading cause of insanity were far short of the real number.⁸⁶ By 1920, he concluded that hereditary factors were responsible for the mental disturbance of forty-one patients.⁸⁷ This meant that hereditary factors now represented the second major category of causes of insanity, although they were still significantly less than the largest category, that of previous attacks.⁸⁸ Despite the substantial increase, Ellerton again stated his belief that it was "probably far under what the number should be".⁸⁹

Ellerton also found many more cases of congenital retardation as a cause of mental disturbance than did Hogg. Between 1903 and 1907, the numbers of cases which Hogg attributed to this cause remained

⁸⁴ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1910", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1911-12), p. 275.

⁸⁵ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1910", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1911-12), p. 275.

⁸⁶ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1916", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1917), p. 906.

⁸⁷ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 285.

⁸⁸ Ellerton cited previous attacks as the major determining cause in seventy-nine cases of insanity ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 285).

⁸⁹ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 285.

constantly below ten, with one exception in 1905.⁹⁰ As soon as Ellerton took over as Inspector of Asylums, these numbers rose significantly. He found twenty-one cases were caused by congenital retardation in 1909, a large increase from Hogg's previous report.⁹¹ Ellerton's interest in categorising causes of mental illness was not unusual in the psychiatric profession in Europe at this time.⁹² They were, however, unusual in Queensland. There is no doubt that these views were motivated in part by humanitarian concerns. Ellerton found many aspects of the treatment of mentally disordered adults in Queensland outdated and even repugnant, particularly the use of restraints.⁹³ Ellerton had worked in an English asylum for sixteen years before arriving in Queensland, and had never used restraints or seen them used. His opinions, however, had little effect on the practice.⁹⁴ Overall, Queensland asylums were nearly a century behind European treatment reforms.⁹⁵

There was one area where the opinions of both Inspectors of Asylums overlapped. Both Hogg and Ellerton argued that determining the causes

⁹⁰ The statistics were six cases in 1903 ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1903", p. 694), seven in 1904 ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1904", p. 592), sixteen in 1905 ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1905", p. 1499), seven in 1906 ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1906", p. 16), and seven in 1907 ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1907", pp. 168, 175).

⁹¹ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1909", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* 2 (1910), p. 662.

⁹² Goldstein, *Console and classify*, p. 383.

⁹³ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 120.

⁹⁴ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 122.

⁹⁵ Until at least the 1930s, Queensland medicine was behind national and international developments (Douglas Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", in R. L. Doherty, ed., *A medical school for Queensland* (St Lucia: Boolarong Publications, 1986), p. 12).

of mental disturbance was absolutely vital in treating it. In his report for 1905, Hogg stated that although causes were very important in treatment, they were very difficult to ascertain, with the causes in around one quarter of cases unable to be determined.⁹⁶ In his report for 1903, he expressed regret that in at least seventy-one cases, or one-fifth of the admissions, insanity was due to some avoidable cause.⁹⁷ This indicates a belief in the importance of early and preventive treatment, although Hogg never argued explicitly for this.⁹⁸ Ellerton, on the other hand, actively promoted the establishment of early treatment wards in general hospitals.⁹⁹ Ellerton also instituted the practice of physical drill as treatment, stating that in other institutions in which this had been conducted, "some useful workers evolved, who were previously utterly useless patients".¹⁰⁰ These attitudes were compatible with the goals of both the eugenics and the mental hygiene movements, both of which promoted early treatment and prevention, as well as physical exercise.¹⁰¹ They also reflected a general tendency in medicine, and more specifically psychiatry, to promote these goals.¹⁰² This indicates the close

⁹⁶ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1905", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1906), p. 1492.

⁹⁷ Hogg, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1903", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1904), p. 694.

⁹⁸ Support for early treatment was almost universal among the psychiatric profession in Australia in the early 1900s (Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 35).

⁹⁹ William A. Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry and its establishment in Queensland", *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, 14, 12 (1992) p. 499.

¹⁰⁰ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1910", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1911-12), p. 275.

¹⁰¹ Grant Rodwell, "Professor Harvey Sutton: national hygienist as eugenicist and educator", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, 2 (1998), p. 165; Lewis, *Managing madness*, pp. 129-31.

¹⁰² Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry and its establishment in Queensland", p. 500.

associations between eugenics, mental hygiene and psychiatry.¹⁰³ It is also important to note Ellerton's statement that physical drill would develop "useful workers". He thus closely allied economic considerations with concerns about the well-being of the patients. It was also common practice to use male patients as cheap labour around the asylum, thus combining economy with therapeutic beliefs about the value of exercise and work.¹⁰⁴

There is evidence that, by the early 1910s, interest in the subject of mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults was growing in public debate in Queensland, in addition to the increased interest displayed by Ellerton in his capacity as Inspector of Asylums. This interest, as in Ellerton's case, was explicitly motivated by humanitarian concerns for the well-being of the mentally disordered. It was frequently accompanied, however, by a tendency to make associations between mental conditions and social order and racial fitness. One of the most obvious examples of this tendency is that of the 1912 *Truth* article with which this chapter opened.¹⁰⁵ The Queensland government responded immediately to the *Truth* article, by requesting a report from the Comptroller-General of Prisons, C. Pennefather. His report showed that Lucy Tate had been

¹⁰³ Margaret Conley, "Citizens – protect your birthright!: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), p. 11; Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 8; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 328.

¹⁰⁴ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 126; Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, pp. 51-3.

¹⁰⁵ "A penal problem", *Truth* (Brisbane), newspaper clipping, in-letter 9503 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

variously convicted of vagrancy, creating a disturbance, obscene exposure, loitering, and obscene language, some of them more than once.¹⁰⁶ Pennefather described her as a "degenerate" who could not be classified as insane, but was "almost certainly mentally deficient".¹⁰⁷ She was capable of doing "rough cleaning work" effectively, but nothing "of a better class".¹⁰⁸ She had been staying in a Salvation Army Home, and had "behaved" while her child was alive, but when the child died became "unmanageable and could not be prevented from going out at night and roaming about the streets."¹⁰⁹ His answer to the inquiry posed in the article was that "unless a special home were provided for persons of her class, I do not think she could be legally detained in any other place than in prison".¹¹⁰ Although Pennefather gave no indication, it is worth speculating in passing on what percentage of the "class" he referred to comprised "feeble-minded" women who had given birth to illegitimate children.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ C. Pennefather, Comptroller-General to Home Secretary, 31 July 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Comptroller-General to Home Secretary, 31 July 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Comptroller-General to Home Secretary, 31 July 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰⁹ Comptroller-General to Home Secretary, 31 July 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁰ Comptroller-General to Home Secretary, 31 July 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹¹ Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 217. During debate over the Mental Deficiency Bill in British parliament in 1912, McKenna stated that "feeble-minded" women who regularly went into the workhouse to give birth to illegitimate children needed to be dealt with more than any other class. Despite criticism from Wedgwood, Dickinson argued that most of these women "were not capable of being mothers and had not the ordinary maternal instinct of an animal": "Control of the feeble-minded: legislation by regulations", *The Times* (London), 8 November 1912, p. 4. For criticism of this idea see "Mental Deficiency Bill: setting up a Board of Control", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 2. See also *Age* (Melbourne), 29 July 1912, p. 6.

Pennefather continued that although such cases received special attention in Brisbane Prison, he was of the opinion that it would be better to have a special institution for them. He argued that there were very few such cases received into prison at that time, but there were many similar cases "which can only be dealt with in prison, unless special establishments are provided to deal with particular cases."¹¹² Pennefather's concerns, as with those of the original newspaper article, were clearly concerns about public disturbance. Tate's offences were all related to disrupting public order. Nevertheless, both the newspaper and the Comptroller-General of Prisons attributed this disruptive behaviour to a "deficient" mentality. Both the article and the report indicate the idea that was developing in Queensland at this time that mental "defectives" should be segregated not only from the community, but also from the mentally ill.

The government extended its inquiries on this subject to include requests for information on the treatment of mental defectives in other states of Australia and in New Zealand. These inquiries revealed that very few states had specific provisions for mental defectives. In New South Wales, there was little provision for those mental defectives not classified as insane, apart from a few cottage homes for mentally defective state

¹¹² Comptroller-General to Home Secretary, 31 July 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

children.¹¹³ Eric Sinclair, the Inspector General of the Insane for New South Wales, complained that the less "obvious" types of mental deficiency were largely ignored by legislation, and by public and private bodies, although he thought public interest in the subject was growing.¹¹⁴ In Victoria, similarly, there was no legislation nor special institutions, but some provision was made for the segregation of feeble-minded children.¹¹⁵ The Victorian Inspector General of the Insane, W. E. Jones, expressed his hope that an inquiry that was being conducted in Victoria at that time would show the need for "legislation to permanently segregate those adult persons who are unfit to have complete liberty."¹¹⁶ He also noted that although there was no legislation to detain mental defectives who were over the age of seventeen, it was "quite certain" that many were "maintained in institutions voluntarily, principally because they are unaware of their legal right to be at large."¹¹⁷ Western Australia and South Australia reported no measures for dealing with the feeble-minded at all,¹¹⁸ although the matter was under

¹¹³ Chief Secretary, Sydney to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 21 August 1912, in-letter 10643 of 1912, A/31784 Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁴ Memorandum from Eric Sinclair, Inspector General of the Insane to Chief Secretary, 15 August 1912, in-letter 10643 of 1912; Chief Secretary, Sydney to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 21 August 1912, in-letter 10643 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁵ Chief Secretary, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 10997 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁶ Chief Secretary, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 10997 of 1912; copy of memorandum from W. Ernest Jones, Inspector General of the Insane, regarding mental defectives, in-letter 10997 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁷ Chief Secretary, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 10997 of 1912; copy of memorandum from Jones re mental defectives, in-letter 10997 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁸ Colonial Secretary, Perth to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 2 September 1912, in-letter 11309 of 1912; Chief Secretary, Adelaide to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 31 August 1912, in-letter 11017 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

consideration in South Australia.¹¹⁹ Tasmania did not respond to the Queensland government's inquiry.¹²⁰

As part of this investigation, the Queensland government also sent inquiries to New Zealand.¹²¹ In this country, there were three legislative enactments for dealing with mental defectives.¹²² The *Education Amendment Act* of 1910 made provision for the establishment of special schools. Under this act, the minister had the power to order children to be institutionalised, and to force parents to maintain their children in an institution. Under the *Amending Industrial Schools Act* of 1908, it was stated that "the period of detention of morally degenerate or otherwise unfit persons may be extended beyond the age of twenty-one years."¹²³ A *Mental Defectives Act*, influenced by the British royal commission of 1908, was passed in 1911. The final stage of the Queensland government's inquiry was to prepare a report on the treatment of mental "defectives" in Great Britain.¹²⁴ This report stated that the 1908 Royal Commission had suggested elaborate provisions for dealing with the "problem" of so-called mentally deficient adults, and concluded that

¹¹⁹ Chief Secretary, Adelaide to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 31 August 1912, in-letter 11017 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹²⁰ The model for the letter which was to be sent out indicates that Tasmania was to be included (Home Secretary, Brisbane, 6 August 1912, in-letter 9665 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives).

¹²¹ Home Secretary, Brisbane to Secretary for Education, Wellington, 6 September 1912, in-letter 11082 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹²² E. Gibbs, Secretary for Education, Wellington to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 11082 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹²³ Gibbs to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 11082 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹²⁴ Memorandum, not signed or addressed, 6 January 1914, in-letter 11309 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

"Although the Imperial Government has not taken any action on this report, a Society known as the Eugenists [sic] Society is promoting a Bill for the compulsory detention of degenerates and feeble minded persons."¹²⁵

The government's inquiries on this subject began in 1912 and continued until 1914. It is therefore interesting that it displayed little interest in the national report of the Committee on the Feeble-minded, published in 1914. This committee had been established by the Australasian Medical Congress in 1911, following a report from Dr Harvey Sutton on studies done by the Victorian Department of Education.¹²⁶ The 1911 Congress was attended by more than two hundred medical professionals from Australia, as well as some British representatives. The original committee comprised Dr Beattie Smith, Dr W. E. Jones, Dr Mary Booth, who later resigned and was replaced by Dr Yule, and Sutton.¹²⁷ The 1914 report advocated the eugenic segregation of the feeble-minded. Queensland did not participate in the information-gathering stage of the report. In fact, the Queensland Director of Education was "hostile" to the committee.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, it is surprising that the publication of the report appeared to excite very little interest in the state, in view of the inquiry which was

¹²⁵ Memorandum, 6 January 1914, in-letter 11309 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹²⁶ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 145.

¹²⁷ Report of the Committee of the Feeble-minded, presented at the Australasian Medical Congress, tenth session, Auckland 1914, enclosed with General Secretary, Australasian Medical Congress to Prime Minister, Queensland [sic], 11 June 1914, in-letter 5801 of 1914, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 146.

still in progress into the treatment and control of mental defectives in other states. The report of the committee was forwarded to the Chief Secretary in Queensland and passed on to the Home Secretary, J. G. Appel. Any plans to raise the matter in parliament were continually delayed, however, suggesting that the report received a low priority from the government.¹²⁹ The Queensland press did not report on it either. In 1914, Appel conducted a tour of the southern states in order to inquire into various institutions administered by his department, including prisons, mental hospitals and benevolent institutions.¹³⁰ Although this was a large-scale tour, it is likely that it was at least partially related to the previous inquiries carried out by the government. Ultimately, no action came about as a result of these inquiries. It seems clear that despite the interest evident in these inquiries, it was not sustained, and the government returned to its indifference on the subject of mental "defectives".

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, however, public discussions of this topic increased, and demonstrated the influence of ideas about racial fitness and heredity. In 1912, The *Queenslander* reported on the first speech of the new president of the British Medical Association, Sir James Barr. Barr argued that the time was ripe for dealing with "mental weaklings", and urged that the public be shown the value of physical

¹²⁹ This is suggested by notes on the copy of the letter: General Secretary, Australasian Medical Congress to Prime Minister [sic], Queensland, 11 June 1914, in-letter 5801 of 1914, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁰ "Inquiry into institutions", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 10.

health and higher intelligence.¹³¹ It is interesting to note that the report of Barr's speech in the London *Times* was entitled "The building of a healthy race: Sir James Barr on eugenics", although Barr made no explicit eugenic statements.¹³² His speech was delivered only a few days after the end of the first International Eugenics Congress, held in London in 1912, an event which the *Queenslander* had not reported. The possible reasons for this omission were discussed in the previous chapter. The report of his statements on mental "weaklings", however, was indicative of an increased interest in this group of people in Queensland.

In 1914, the *Queenslander* published an opinion piece on a bill for the segregation of the feeble-minded which was being discussed in the Victorian parliament. The Victorian bill was intended to establish a rural institution for feeble-minded adults, "where those who are defective mentally can be segregated and usefully employed."¹³³ The article claimed that the bill would bring Victoria "at least abreast of other progressive countries, so far as dealing with persons who are mentally deficient is concerned."¹³⁴ The author of this article, "Hokohan", advocated the establishment of a similar institution in Brisbane "while the number of feeble-minded is comparatively small and easy to cope with".¹³⁵ The alternative was to wait, and postpone any action "until it is

¹³¹ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 August 1912, p. 13.

¹³² "The building of a healthy race: Sir James Barr on eugenics", *The Times* (London), 24 July 1912, pp. 7-8.

¹³³ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 June 1914, p. 5.

¹³⁴ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 June 1914, p. 5.

¹³⁵ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 June 1914, p. 5.

forced upon us, and the increased proportion [of the feeble-minded] makes it more difficult to deal with."¹³⁶ There was a definite sense of impending crisis in the conclusion to the article:

With a young country such as ours, surely now is the time for something to be done in this respect, remembering that "Prevention is better than cure." The need is being emphasised more and more everyday ...¹³⁷

The fear that mental defectives were rapidly becoming unmanageable in numbers was quite clear in the article, although there was no direct link made with racial fitness. In discussing the "increas[ing] proportion" of the feeble-minded, and the imminent need to remedy the situation, the author appeared to be suggesting that mental defectives were reproducing at a greater rate than the "normal" population. There was no explicit statement, however, that this would represent a potential threat to racial fitness. The language in the article referred more to practical problems that would be "difficult to deal with". The statement that "Prevention is better than cure" was ambiguous. It could have meant that it would better to segregate mental defectives from the community before their behaviour and numbers became unmanageable. It could also have implied, however, that one motivation for segregation was to prevent this group from reproducing. It is possible that the phrasing was deliberately vague, in order to create a sense of urgency without stating explicitly

¹³⁶ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 June 1914, p. 5.

¹³⁷ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 June 1914, p. 5.

what was meant. The author of the article did not state what "cure" could be employed, if prevention failed. Regardless of his intentions, "Hokohan" adopted a similar attitude to the author of the article in the *Truth*: both focused on mental "deficiency" as the cause of problematic behaviour.

As well as these articles, which were concerned with events in Queensland and Australia, Queensland newspapers published articles on overseas events relevant to the "problem" of mentally defective and mentally ill adults. The early 1910s was a period of increased international interest in these groups.¹³⁸ Queensland newspapers reported on very little of this activity directly, although by 1914, they were showing more interest in the topic than in any previous year. In this year, the *Queenslander* published an article about an institution for "criminally feeble-minded girls" in New York. This article argued that moral "deficiencies" were linked to physical ones, and used this as evidence that punishment "should fit the criminal, and not the crime."¹³⁹ The girls discussed in this article were both physically and mentally deficient, and the suggested solution was to segregate them completely from society. The preference for segregation as a solution to problems of public disturbance was related to concerns about social order and

¹³⁸ In 1909, California became the first American state to introduce legislation for the eugenic sterilisation of certain groups of the mentally "unfit" (Joel Braslow, *Mental ills and bodily cures: psychiatric treatment in the first half of the twentieth century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 56). In 1907, the English Eugenics Education Society was formed; in 1908, the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded reported in Britain; in 1913, British parliament passed the *Mental Deficiency Act*, which authorised the eugenic segregation of mental "defectives".

¹³⁹ "Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

control that were increasing in the early twentieth century.¹⁴⁰ It also encompassed anxieties about racial fitness, since one motivation advanced for segregation was to prevent the reproduction of the "unfit". Although this motivation was not made explicit in the article, it was implied by the author's insistence on hereditary factors in causing "criminal feeble-mindedness".

The leaders of the Modernist Association of Queensland held strong views on the subject of mental "defectives". These views were partly influenced by overseas debates, but reflected the idiosyncratic attitudes of the association. In 1915, Price, in the *Forerunner*, expressed concern about the number of feeble-minded children in Queensland. He stated:

Here in Brisbane alone I could name many feeble-minded girls brought up in orphanages and then let loose, who regularly add to our population of feeble-minded persons, there being no law by which they can be wisely restrained.¹⁴¹

As in the article in the *Queenslander*, the *Forerunner* singled out "feeble-minded" girls as a particular problem. Fears that mental defectives displayed disproportionate fecundity were, in theory, applicable to both sexes. In practice, however, many commentators argued that it was "feeble-minded" women who represented the biggest problem.¹⁴² The

¹⁴⁰ Craig Campbell, "Liberalism in Australian history, 1880-1920", in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), p. 28; John Docker, "Can the centre hold?: conceptions of the state 1890-1925", in Sydney Labour History Group, *What rough beast?*, p. 58; Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society*, p. 99.

¹⁴¹ Douglas Price, "The slavery of sex", *Forerunner*, 4 (August 1915), p. 22.

¹⁴² *The Times* (London), 20 July 1912, p. 12; Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", pp. 205, 220; Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion: knowledge, gender and power in modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.

Forerunner went on to describe "bad parentage" as "wicked", arguing that it was a more criminal act than many others which carried legal penalties.¹⁴³ Price's arguments were, in contrast to many newspaper articles, clearly eugenic. He strongly implied his support for legislation to prevent the feeble-minded from reproducing.¹⁴⁴ In contrast, in an earlier article, Price had argued that genius was linked to insanity, and that it would be better to be a genius and die insane than to live a long and respectable, but boring, life.¹⁴⁵

Price's views had little influence on government debate about the treatment and control of mental defectives and the mentally ill. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the similarities between the views of an organisation which espoused eugenic ideals, and those of mainstream newspapers. The language used in these articles illustrates that the mentally "defective" were regarded as a real, if vaguely defined threat, and were increasingly seen as distinct from the mentally ill. This threat could be related either to their reproductive or their disruptive public behaviour. Thus, concerns about these groups of people at this time encompassed anxieties about both moral and social order, and racial

194. In America, the landmark *Buck v. Bell* decision targeted a "feeble-minded" girl who had already given birth to a mentally "defective" child (Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, p. 91).

¹⁴³ Price, "The slavery of sex", p. 22.

¹⁴⁴ Price, "The slavery of sex", p. 22.

¹⁴⁵ Price, "The meaning of genius", *Forerunner*, 1 [1914], p. 25. For a historical examination of the link between genius and insanity see Sander Gilman, "The mad man as artist: medicine, history and degenerate art", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20 (1985), pp. 575-97.

fitness. Many of these articles also indicate the frequency with which segregation was advocated as a solution to this "problem".

The interest displayed in the subject of mental "defectives" in Queensland in the early 1910s was a departure from previous discussions on the topic, as it encompassed some differentiation between the two groups. In addition, some of the debate was now directed towards the issue of racial fitness as it related to these groups of people. Ultimately, however, no significant action developed from this interest. The government investigation in 1912 was the only indication of any attempts to formulate legislation relating to this group during this period. The outbreak of the First World War led to a decline in interest in the treatment and control of mentally disturbed adults in Queensland.¹⁴⁶ In 1915, the Labor party came to power in the state for the first time. Not long after this, a scandal erupted at Goodna Asylum, when the *Daily Mail* published a series of articles on the conditions at Goodna Hospital for the Insane.¹⁴⁷ The claims made by the *Daily Mail* were sweeping and sensationalist. They mentioned the condition of the intellectually impaired in the asylum, but focused on sexual scandal.¹⁴⁸ The allegations led T. J. Ryan, the newly elected Labor premier, to appoint a royal commission into conditions at the asylum. This commission found that most of the *Mail's* claims were not justified, although Raymond

¹⁴⁶ The lack of interest in mentally "unfit" adults during the war years was comparable to other states (Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 146).

¹⁴⁷ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁸ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, pp. 130-31.

Evans contends that "the Commission's findings can be summarised as a whitewash".¹⁴⁹ The recommendations of the report were for administrative rather than legislative action. After this inquiry, the Labor government appeared to lose interest in policy relating to mentally disordered adults. There was very little government activity in the area of mental health over the next twenty years.¹⁵⁰

In the late 1910s, the Queensland government received two expressions of interest in the subject of mentally "defective" adults, and ignored both, indicating that it placed a low priority on the subject at this time. In July 1917, George Benstead, the Principal of the Special School for Boys at Otekaike in New Zealand wrote to R. H. W. Bligh, a lecturer for the White Cross League at Invercargill, to discuss "a question which may affect the future of some Australian States": the care, control and training of the feeble-minded.¹⁵¹ Benstead described the subject as being "of paramount importance seeing that the multiplication of such is a menace to the well

¹⁴⁹ Raymond Evans, "Flickering insights: the press, the state and the asylum and Goodna Mental Hospital, Queensland, 1915", in Catharine Coleborne and Dolly MacKinnon, eds, *"Madness" in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2003), p. 108. See also Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁰ Jordan, "Health and social welfare", pp. 320-21; Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 130. An exception to this was the establishment in 1918 of a mental ward at Brisbane General Hospital, a development of which Ellerton approved.

¹⁵¹ George Benstead, Principal, Special School for Boys, Otekaike to R. H. W. Bligh, Lecturer, White Cross League, Invercargill, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives. Bligh was the organising lecturer of the White Cross League, an organisation which undertook various campaigns for "social purity" during the early twentieth century, primarily for sex education and against venereal disease (Greg Logan, *Sex education in Queensland: a history of the debate since 1900* (Brisbane: Education History Unit, Department of Education, 1991), p. 13; Arthur J. Pullen to Department of Public Instruction, 4 October 1919, in-letter 42440 of 1919, Queensland State Archives).

being of any State", thus emphasising eugenic fears of the reproduction of defectives and the threat to society which this supposedly constituted.¹⁵² Benstead contended that it was

... now almost universally conceded that the greater part of the social misfits in our civilised communities are mentally abnormal and that the ranks of the pauper, criminal, delinquent, prostitute ... are largely made up of individuals who are more or less mentally deficient.¹⁵³

Benstead's statement that social problems such as poverty, crime, delinquency and prostitution were linked to mental deficiency was characteristic of eugenic propaganda.¹⁵⁴ The eugenic influence was further reinforced by his statement that mental deficientes constituted a "problem for the racial wellbeing of our community."¹⁵⁵ He thus explicitly characterised mental defectives as a threat to racial fitness. Benstead went on to argue that "new" countries such as Australia had a better opportunity of avoiding this threat, as "the stream of pollution is not so pronounced" as it was in older countries. Therefore, he urged the Queensland Government, in their own interests, to undertake a survey into the "multiplication and perpetuation of the unfit section of their

¹⁵² Benstead to Bligh, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵³ Benstead to Bligh, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁴ "Eugenics and degeneration", *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4; "Feeble-minded children who drift into crime", *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14; Tony Austin, "Cecil Cook, scientific thought and 'Half-castes'", *Aboriginal History*, 14, 1-2 (1990), p. 109.

¹⁵⁵ Benstead to Bligh, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

community.”¹⁵⁶ The suggestion that Australia, as a “newer” country, was in a position to prevent the reproduction of mental “defectives” before it became a problem was similar to sentiments expressed by “Hokohan” in the *Queenslander* in 1914. It is probable that this idea had support in certain sections of the community at this time. It failed, however, to impress the Queensland government.

Benstead had been hired in England ten years previously to form a scheme for dealing with the problem in New Zealand, and therefore believed his advice would be useful in Queensland.¹⁵⁷ Bligh, his correspondent who forwarded Benstead’s letter to the Home Department, agreed. Bligh wrote to the Home Secretary, John Huxham, that in his opinion “it would be very valuable to have work similar to that at Otekaike in all the Australian States”, and that he hoped the Home Department would encourage Benstead’s visit.¹⁵⁸ Huxham, however, replied that he was unable to take advantage of the offer.¹⁵⁹ Benstead was clearly attempting to secure a job with the Queensland government, and his qualifications were not outstanding. The lack of interest on the part of the government is thus not particularly surprising, although it also indicated their lack of interest in the subject of mental “defectives”.

¹⁵⁶ Benstead to Bligh, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁷ Benstead to Bligh, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁸ Bligh, Invercargill to Minister for Home Affairs, Brisbane, 2 August 1917, in-letter 7848 of 1917, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Home Secretary, Brisbane, to Bligh, Invercargill, 27 August 1917, in-letter 7848 of 1917, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

In 1918, another expression of interest was received from a more official quarter, with little more success.

In November of this year, H. W. Arnist, the editor of the *Medical Journal of Australia*, wrote to the Queensland government to announce that:

A considerable amount of public attention has recently been directed to the problem of the mentally deficient. It is admitted on all sides that proper and adequate provision is not taken in the Commonwealth or in other countries for the control of these unfortunate individuals or for the protection of the community against their acts of impulse.¹⁶⁰

Arnist's desire that mental "defectives" should be "controlled" would appear to be related to anxieties about social order. The mention of "acts of impulse", however, was more ambiguous. It is hard to judge from the context whether he was also referring to behaviour that might cause public disturbances, or whether it was a reference to the supposed fecundity of mental defectives.

Arnist continued that although several suggestions for solutions to this "problem" had been made, and the financial question had also been discussed, the *Medical Journal of Australia* was disappointed that no attempts had been made to formulate policy on this matter.¹⁶¹ Therefore, Arnist suggested that a conference on the subject be held in Sydney in

¹⁶⁰ H. W. Arnist, Editor, *Medical Journal of Australia*, Sydney to Chief Secretary, Brisbane, 21 November 1918, in-letter not provided (copy forwarded to Home Department for advice), A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶¹ Arnist to Chief Secretary, 21 November 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

January or February of 1919. His letter comprised an invitation to Ryan, the Queensland Chief Secretary, to attend if such a conference was organised. The journal had also sent invitations to the Acting Prime Minister; Herbert Hardacre, the Secretary for Public Instruction; the Director of Education; Dr J. Espie Dods; and Ellerton. This letter was referred to the Home Secretary, Huxham, for advice. In response to Huxham's advice, Ryan informed Arnist that the matter was receiving consideration, although a typed note, initialed by Huxham, on the copy of the letter indicated that the Cabinet decision was that no action should be taken on the matter.¹⁶²

After the war, cases of shell shock among Queensland soldiers led to renewed debate about mental disorders. Shell shock challenged many assumptions about mentality, in Australia and internationally.¹⁶³ Debate over the best treatment for victims of shell shock also occurred in Queensland at this time.¹⁶⁴ Most soldiers suffering from shell shock were placed at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, in spite of the fact that the

¹⁶² Chief Secretary, Brisbane to Editor, *Medical Journal of Australia*, Sydney, 26 November 1918, in-letter not provided (copy), A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶³ The incidence of shell shock during the war raised questions about race, gender and social class. See Ted Bogacz, "War neurosis and cultural change in England, 1914-22: the work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock'", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24, 2 (1989), pp. 227-32, 241; Stephen Garton, "Freud versus the rat: understanding shell shock in World War 1", *Australian Cultural History*, 16 (1997/1998), pp. 51-2; Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 39. It also occasioned considerable debate over organic theories of mental illness, as opposed to environmental theories. See, for example, H. C. Marr, *Psychoses of the war including neurasthenia and shell shock* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), pp. 143-55, who argued that a predisposition towards mental instability and shell shock was inherited; and G. Elliot Smith and T. H. Pear, *Shell shock and its lessons* (Manchester: University Press, 1918), pp. 77-89, who argued against this view.

¹⁶⁴ A. L. Hutton to Home Secretary, 13 March 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31768, Queensland State Archives.

asylum at Dunwich was already crowded with inebriates.¹⁶⁵ Some shell shock patients were also sent to Goodna Asylum. Ellerton stated that out of twenty-three returned soldiers admitted there since the beginning of the war, only three cases were genuinely a result of the stresses of the war, and one of these had previously been insane.¹⁶⁶

Ellerton believed that shell shock cases should be classified and segregated, from society and from other types of mental illness, and that further differentiation should be made between different types of shell shock. He stated his preference for early treatment, not hampered by fears of classifying these soldiers as insane. This attitude was in contrast to southern states, where protecting shell shock patients from the "stigma" of being classified as insane was a priority.¹⁶⁷ Ellerton's interest in classifying and segregating was characteristic of psychiatric treatment during this period. Ellerton reported in 1919 that his prediction that the war would lead to a rise in admissions to insane asylums had been proven correct.¹⁶⁸ The government, however, did not frame concerns about the treatment of returned soldiers suffering from mental problems in terms of a threat to racial fitness.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Home Secretary to Hutton, 9 August 1918, in-letter 3973 of 1918; Dunwich Benevolent Asylum to Home Secretary, 6 August 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31768, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Ellerton, Inspector of Asylums, Goodna to Home Secretary, 21 March 1918, in-letter 2392 of 1918, A/31768, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁷ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁸ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 283.

¹⁶⁹ Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp. 24-5.

In Queensland, there is evidence that after the First World War, debates about the mentally ill and mental "defectives" were more likely to distinguish between these groups, and to see the second group as a threat to racial fitness and social order. There was also an increasingly anxious tone in discussion of these subjects.¹⁷⁰ Once again, Ellerton's views represented extreme examples of this tendency. In his annual report for 1916, he advocated the sterilisation of mental "defectives".¹⁷¹ In 1918, he urged sterilisation for those "whose power of procreation was a menace to the State", which Ellerton believed included the mentally diseased, chronic alcoholics, and professional criminals.¹⁷² He argued that it was an extremely important issue for the health of the community as a whole, but was also a pressing economic problem and increasing financial burden to the state. He was also concerned about illegitimacy, stating that it had been established beyond a doubt that mental defectives existed "largely among unmarried mothers" and professional prostitutes, and that this class of people should be prevented from procreating future generations of mental defectives.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ See Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate", p. 209, and Cawte, "Cranio-metry and eugenics", p. 37, who argue that World War I was an important turning point for eugenics in Australia, while Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 165, and Jones, "The master potter", pp. 319-21, among others, stress continuity. It is important to remember that discourse during any period is complex and multifaceted.

¹⁷¹ Ellerton, Inspector of Asylums, Goodna to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 24 October 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, Queensland State Archives A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷² Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1918", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 4 (1919-20), p. 52.

¹⁷³ He did not state this position so explicitly again, but throughout the 1920s he continued to argue that hereditary factors were the leading cause of insanity (see

Ellerton does not appear to have enjoyed a good relationship with Labor governments. In 1912, in raising the salary of the Inspector of Asylums from £800 to £1000, Appel, the Home Secretary, described Ellerton as expert and active.¹⁷⁴ In contrast, during debate in 1914, a Labor parliamentarian, John Fihelly, accused Ellerton, whom he stated he had never met, of having delusions.¹⁷⁵ In 1920, tension between Ellerton and the Labor government over funding led one government backbencher to express the opinion that Ellerton should "be inside" an asylum, rather than in charge of them.¹⁷⁶ As Ellerton retained his position as Inspector of Asylums in Queensland for almost twenty years, it seems unlikely that these concerns were serious. They may indicate, however, that Labor governments did not place a high priority on Ellerton's opinions. Many of Ellerton's ideas were not particularly well received in Queensland.¹⁷⁷ Thus, although his beliefs were strongly held, it seems that they were not influential on either parliament or public opinion.

"Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1924", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1035).

¹⁷⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 112 (14 October 1912), p. 1680. Herbert Hardacre and William Hamilton, members of the opposition Labor party, attacked Ellerton at this time.

¹⁷⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (13 November 1914), pp. 1937-38.

¹⁷⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 134 (28 January 1919-20), p. 2578.

¹⁷⁷ Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government*, pp. 125, 132. In 1929, Ellerton testified as to the insanity of a defendant, arguing that many people in the past had been sent to jail when an asylum would have been more appropriate; the judge, however, was not convinced by this argument, and sentenced the defendant to jail ("Psychology and crime", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 29 May 1920, p. 38).

Ellerton's arguments were strongly centred on the threat to racial fitness which he believed was posed by mental "defectives". His argument that the reproduction of certain sections of the community constituted a "menace to the state" was reminiscent of eugenic propaganda, as was his tendency to link mental deficiency with social problems such as crime, prostitution and illegitimacy.¹⁷⁸ This tendency was also displayed in an article in the *Queenslander* in 1920. In this article, the *Queenslander* argued that "The mentally deficient is not necessarily a criminal, but he is potentially",¹⁷⁹ thus making an association between mental deficiency and crime. The article that the "obvious solution is that the dangerous ones should be isolated", and that crime could not be avoided "so long as society permits propagation by persons manifestly unfit."¹⁸⁰ This was a strong position, and one which, in contrast to earlier articles, explicitly advocated segregation as a means of preventing the reproduction of a certain, "unfit", section of the community. It must also be noted, however, that, as was seen in Chapter One, the article acknowledged environmental influences. It discussed a study conducted in an institution for boys which had found that in many cases of "degeneracy", the cause was "slight physical defects" rather than mental or moral ones.¹⁸¹ This reflects the tendency to blend hereditarian and

¹⁷⁸ See for example Schuster, *Eugenics*, pp. 172-73, in which he discusses both the "great expense to the community" occasioned in educating the feeble-minded, and the "great danger to the community" which they subsequently posed.

¹⁷⁹ "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

Schlapp said in 1911 that all feeble-minded people were potential criminals ("Feeble-minded children who drift into crime", *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14).

¹⁸⁰ "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

¹⁸¹ "Environment and heredity", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

environmental positions, as is suggested by the article's title, "Environment and heredity".

During the 1920s, there was a continuing public and professional interest in the problems of mentally ill and mentally "deficient" adults. There was also greater concern with heredity and racial fitness, and preventing such people from reproducing, than had been the case previously. The government, however, remained inactive.¹⁸² This did not change during the brief tenure in government of the Country Party, under Arthur Moore, from 1929 to 1932. There is evidence, however, that the attitudes towards the intellectually impaired that had been apparent during the 1910s and 1920 were more prevalent in Queensland by 1929.

This year was a period of increased national and international activity relating to the mentally ill and the mentally "defective".¹⁸³ In Australia, the federal government published the results of a national survey established in 1925 to investigate the educational and institutional aspects of mental deficiency. The report's author, Dr W. Ernest Jones, claimed that mental deficiency was a problem of "supreme national importance".¹⁸⁴ The survey was intended to provide information about the extent of the "problem" of mental deficiency in Australia. Although the report covered all three grades of mental deficiency identified by the

¹⁸² Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 38; Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, pp. 78, 131.

¹⁸³ Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", p. 146.

¹⁸⁴ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 3.

British Royal Commission of 1908, and also discussed moral defectives, it was most concerned with the third, "border-line class", of the feeble-minded.¹⁸⁵ Jones noted that although lower grades of mental defectives were adequately cared for in Queensland, there was no real provision for the feeble-minded.¹⁸⁶ He also criticised the Queensland government for failing to make an attempt to determine the proportion of mental deficient in Queensland prisons.¹⁸⁷

Although this was a national report, and received considerable publicity in other states, Queensland newspapers did not report on its publication, despite the fact that Queensland institutions and schools had participated in the survey. The press instead focused on events in England. In February, the *Brisbane Courier* reported that the Grand Council of the National Citizens' Union in England had urged the Minister for Health to conduct an inquiry into "the best method of dealing with mental deficiency and incurable diseases" with particular focus on the possibility of legalised sterilisation.¹⁸⁸ The article stated that a petition, signed by "50 distinguished men of the Church, law, and medicine", had been presented to British parliament by the Council. This petition advocated the legalisation of sterilisation, arguing that it was currently legalised in twenty-three states of America, and also in

¹⁸⁵ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁷ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 8. Jones believed it was "practically unbelievable that all the inmates are of normal mentality."

¹⁸⁸ "Mental deficiency: inquiry urged in England", *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

Denmark, Norway and Czechoslovakia. It further stated that an inquiry into the possibility of legalised sterilisation was urgently needed in England, "as it is largely owing to State intervention that thousands of diseased and deficient persons are kept alive."¹⁸⁹ Finally, it stated categorically that "segregation has failed."¹⁹⁰ There was no editorial comment on this petition.

Later in the same year, in an article entitled "Mentally deficient: apprehension in Britain", the *Courier* also reported on the British Health Estimates figures, which showed that the number of mental defectives in Britain had doubled since the Royal Commission of 1908.¹⁹¹ In this article, however, the *Courier* stated that sterilisation was not "a satisfactory solution".¹⁹² It continued that "An ideal method of treatment was in settlements of 1000, where deficient persons could be trained till they were fit, and then released, but this would be most costly."¹⁹³ The article also pointed out that the information available at that time about the hereditary transmission of mental "defects" was not sufficient to reach a conclusion. These articles, like most of the articles published in Queensland newspapers on the topics of mental deficiency and sterilisation, focused on overseas events and were devoid of explicit

¹⁸⁹ "Mental deficiency", *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ "Mental deficiency", *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 16.

¹⁹¹ "Mentally deficient: apprehension in Britain", *Brisbane Courier*, 3 May 1929, p. 18.

¹⁹² "Mentally deficient", *Brisbane Courier*, 3 May 1929, p. 18.

¹⁹³ "Mentally deficient", *Brisbane Courier*, 3 May 1929, p. 18.

editorial coverage. Nevertheless, their publication indicates that the Queensland press, at least, was taking an interest in the subject.

At the same time, Ellerton continued to place an emphasis on inherited factors as a cause of insanity. By 1929, the population of inmates in insane asylums in the state had increased to the point that the annual reports of the Inspector of Asylums covered the asylum at Goodna separately from those at Ipswich¹⁹⁴ and Toowoomba. At Goodna, Ellerton attributed a total of 117 cases of mental disturbance to hereditary factors, a number that represented almost thirty percent of the total admissions.¹⁹⁵ In his report on Toowoomba for the same year, however, he discovered only eight cases in which hereditary factors were the primary predetermining cause. Ellerton maintained that this was so far below other figures that it must be inaccurate, the same argument he had used when he found the figures at Goodna Asylum did not support his theories.¹⁹⁶ Throughout the 1930s, until his retirement in 1937, these figures remained fairly constant. Ellerton continued to find heredity as a major cause of mental illness at Goodna, but not at

¹⁹⁴ The asylum at Ipswich first became a separate institution from that at Goodna in 1910, in order to relieve overcrowding (Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 130).

¹⁹⁵ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1929-30", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1015.

¹⁹⁶ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1929-30", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1030.

Toowoomba. He continued to account for this fact by stating that the figures were too low to be accurate.¹⁹⁷

There was a further expression of interest in the subject of mentally ill and mentally defective adults in 1929. In October, Randolph Bedford, the member for Warrego, argued in Queensland parliament that "some radical attempt" should be made "to stem the rising tide of insanity and consequently reduce its cost".¹⁹⁸ His language strongly echoed eugenic propaganda.¹⁹⁹ Bedford was specifically discussing the budget for the portfolio of Insanity for that year, but his concerns had a much wider scope. In making his point, he cited the Juke family study, arguing that this research had parallels in Queensland, although the state was "not yet old enough to have produced the great crop of misery which the admitted fecundity of people of this sort brings in such tremendous volume."²⁰⁰ This was another reference to the "fecundity" of degenerates, although Bedford was forceful in his statement of the consequences of this "fecundity". He stated that since the Jukes had first been observed, they had

... grown into something which constitutes an active menace, not only to the United States of America in respect of their insanity

¹⁹⁷ For example, in 1934, the number of cases caused by heredity was second at Goodna, but at Toowoomba he could attribute only seven cases (less than eight percent of the total) to this cause ("Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1933-4", p. 824).

¹⁹⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1105.

¹⁹⁹ For example, in 1912, Dr A. Tredgold wrote in the *Eugenics Review* that it would "soon become obviously necessary [to] do something towards stemming the increasing tide of degeneracy" (quoted in "The feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 16 May 1912, p. 6). See also Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics*, p. 37.

²⁰⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1105.

and criminal expenditure, but also causes a continually increasing loss in morality in the communities in which these people have their being.²⁰¹

In common with both "Hokohan" and Benstead, Bedford appeared to believe that Queensland was not yet at as great a risk from this fecundity as were other countries. Bedford further stated that the entire problem of mental defectives could be blamed on "the hypocrisy of society, which will not look this thing fair in the eye", a statement that he intended as a reference to a reluctance to discuss the hereditary nature of mental "deficiency".²⁰²

Bedford advised the Home Secretary, J. C. Peterson, to check his records, where he would find that there were "already one or two Jukes families in the making in this State continuously increasing the charge on the money of the State and continuously increasing the menace to the wellbeing of the people who are still sane."²⁰³ This suggested that Bedford supported the idea that insanity was causing degeneration in the community. As Bedford's speech indicates, there was some confusion over the difference between mental "defectives" and the insane in Queensland at this time. Although he initially used the word "insane", his subsequent discussion indicated that he was also concerned with those people more usually identified as mentally defective.

²⁰¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

²⁰² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

²⁰³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

Bedford referred to a specific case where a man with three children, all of whom were being supported by the state, was detained in Goodna for four years, after which time he was released, whereupon he fathered another three children. These next three children were "now also being maintained by the State", as their father had been re-institutionalised. Bedford's concerns reflect the fear that both mentally ill and mentally defective adults were breeding at an alarming rate. It further illustrates the belief that because they were incapable of looking after themselves, they would inevitably become a financial burden on hardworking taxpayers. Thus, the fears surrounding these people had an economic basis. Bedford further elaborated on this argument when he stated that the Jukes were an "active menace" to their country, not only because of the expenditure that their insanity and criminal tendencies necessitated, but also because of the loss of morality that they caused by their mere existence in communities.²⁰⁴ Bedford's sentiments were not dissimilar to those of earlier commentators, but he was unusual in his explicit espousal of eugenic reform as the solution.²⁰⁵

Edward Larson has argued that the preference for segregation of the feeble-minded in Britain was due to the consideration of moral and social factors as well, or above, scientific ones.²⁰⁶ He compares this to the

²⁰⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106. A similar argument was made in the article "The feeble-minded: I. – the problem", in *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4. See Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 9-11.

²⁰⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

²⁰⁶ Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics", p. 48.

situation in America, where legislation for the sterilisation of the mentally "unfit" was passed as early as 1909.²⁰⁷ Searle has suggested that eugenics was particularly popular in societies where science was respected, but where few civil servants or politicians had had a scientific education.²⁰⁸ These circumstances were also evident in Queensland, in fact to a greater extent than in Britain, indicating that there would be less support for sterilisation in Queensland than in Britain, which was the case. It is also possible that Queensland governments were particularly wary of promoting sterilisation in view of the unusual nature of Queensland politics, which tended to be dominated by the two groups most consistently opposed to sterilisation: labour movements and Roman Catholics.²⁰⁹

Between 1900 and 1929, fears about a growing population of mentally "unfit" adults were evident in Queensland. Although they encompassed the mentally ill, they often focused on the intellectually impaired, particularly the group identified as feeble-minded. These fears were influenced by eugenic ideas which portrayed these people as contributing to racial degeneration, and propagating at a disproportionate rate to produce future generations of similarly defective offspring. Government action on the issue of mental "defectives" was more likely to be motivated by press interest than by professional concerns. This is demonstrated

²⁰⁷ Braslow, *Mental ills*, p. 54; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 88-91.

²⁰⁸ Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 114.

²⁰⁹ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, pp. 122, 166-67.

both by its reaction to the 1912 article in the *Truth*, and its lack of reaction to various other expressions of concern between 1900 and 1929. The preference for acting on perceived public opinion rather than professional advice was typical of Queensland society.²¹⁰ Queensland did not have the professional support base that both Britain and America, and, to a lesser extent, some of the southern states of Australia, drew on to argue for eugenic legislation.²¹¹ Nevertheless, the existence of anxieties about racial fitness among those in influential positions would almost certainly have had an effect on both the perception and the treatment of mentally "unfit" adults. This became more apparent after 1929.

²¹⁰ Chapter One argued that professionals had little impact on government policy in Queensland (Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915*, p. 307; Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", p. 12). In England, the Eugenics Education Society believed that although government leaders were generally supportive of the aims of the society, only overwhelming public support would convince them to enact legislation (Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics", p. 49).

²¹¹ In Western Australia and Victoria, eugenic legislation was supported by an influential cross section of professionals and parliamentarians (Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 144-60; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 319-42). The dominance of rural concerns and policies in Queensland parliament and society was discussed in Chapter One. See David Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, 1900 to 1930*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1999, p. 34. Chapter One also discussed the relatively neglected status of health care in Queensland. See Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, pp. 108-12.

Chapter Three

A "menace to the community"

Mentally "unfit" adults, eugenic ideology and racial fitness, 1930-50

In 1938, during a debate in Queensland parliament on the proposed *Backward Persons Act* of 1938, Arthur Moore, a member and former leader of the Country Party, described backward persons as "a menace to the community, particularly in the propagation of their species".¹ By 1930, the idea that the mentally "defective" and, to a lesser extent, the mentally ill, were "problem" groups, associated with various social issues, was established in Queensland debate. At this time, although the problems with which the mentally ill and the mentally "defective" were associated in public discourse did not change, there was a new sense of threat in much of the discussion surrounding them. This was seen most clearly in the repeated use of the word *menace* in discussing this group of people, both the "backward" and the mentally ill, although more frequently the former. Moore's statement was by no means an isolated example of this trend, and it illustrated that this "menace" was often believed to be aimed at racial fitness. This chapter will examine the

¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1801.

debate surrounding the treatment and control of mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults in Queensland from 1930 to 1950.

During this period, a wide range of opinions were expressed in Queensland, from the most optimistic, environmentalist arguments to hard-line hereditarian ideas. This chapter will discuss the incidence of ideas about racial fitness in relation to mentally "unfit" adults between 1930 and 1950. It will explore the intersection of these ideas with the influence of eugenic ideology. The chapter will first examine debate on this subject during the early 1930s. It will then turn to the influence of this debate on the 1938 legislation, which comprised the *Backward Persons Act*, aimed at the mentally "deficient", and the *Mental Hygiene Act*, aimed at the mentally ill. The fact that the government considered it necessary to pass two separate pieces of legislation, one for the mentally ill, and one for mental defectives, indicates that a distinction was drawn between these two groups of people. This distinction represents an important change from the way in which the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired were viewed by the Queensland government before 1930. This change was intended to benefit both groups of people. The debate during this period, however, particularly in parliament and the press during the readings of the bills, revealed that there was a significant difference between attitudes towards those with a mental illness that could potentially be cured, and those with a defective mentality, an incurable condition. Most who expressed support for

sterilisation used humanitarian sentiments, arguing that they wanted to do what was in the best interests of a group of people that were unable to look after themselves. Almost always, however, financial considerations were also evident in any discussion of this group of people. The expression of such views continued into the 1940s, although significant changes were apparent by the end of this period. Thus, the opinions expressed in Queensland between 1930 and 1950 on the subject of mentally "unfit" adults were varied, and revealed complex motivations and influences.

It has been established that there was continuing interest in the care and control of both the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired, and support for eugenic solutions to this problem, well into and indeed beyond the 1930s in Australia and internationally.² A significant change during this period was the growth in popularity of the mental hygiene movement.³ This movement was founded in America in 1909, but the

² Debbie Ambery, "The Hopewood experiment", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 59 (1998), pp. 93-100; Joel Braslow, *Mental ills and bodily cures: psychiatric treatment in the first half of the twentieth century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 65-6; Stephen Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales, 1880-1940* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1988), pp. 77-81; Milton Lewis, *Managing madness: psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), pp. 41, 129-32; Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion: knowledge, gender and power in modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 63; Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 648-49; Rob Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 40, 3 (1994), pp. 318-34.

³ Clifford Whittingham Beers, *A mind that found itself: an autobiography* 7th ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1948); Robert Castel, Francoise Castle, and Anne Lovell, *The psychiatric society*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 35-37; E. Cunningham Dax, *Asylum to community: the development of the mental hygiene service in Victoria, Australia* (Melbourne: Cheshire, for the World

First International Congress on Mental Hygiene was not held until 1930.⁴ During the 1930s, mental hygiene councils were established in Victoria in 1930 and New South Wales in 1932.⁵ The mental hygiene movement argued that the best hope of solving the problem of mental and intellectual disorders was to discriminate clearly between the curable and the incurable, to identify a curable problem at an early stage and thus prevent it from degenerating into an incurable condition.⁶ This belief led to differences in attitudes towards these groups.⁷ Eugenicists, for the most part, held similar beliefs; if there were differences between the two movements, it was in attitudes towards the second, incurable group.

Federation for Mental Health, 1961); William A. Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry and its establishment in Queensland", *Journal of Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, 14, 12 (1992), pp. 496-504; Roy Porter, *A social history of madness: stories of the insane* (London: Phoenix Giants, 1987), pp. 197-98; Mary Elene Wood, *The writing on the wall: women's autobiographies and the asylum* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), pp. 127, 146.

⁴ Beers, *A mind that found itself*, pp. 255-57; Stephen Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies: re-considering eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940", *Historical Studies*, 103 (1994), pp. 167-68: there were two official delegates from Australia, E. Morris Miller (who was unable to attend) and Ralph Noble.

⁵ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 170.

⁶ Lewis argues that psychiatrists used the mental hygiene movement to promote early treatment (*Managing madness*, p. 48). See also Mark Finnane, "From dangerous lunatic to human rights?: the law and mental illness in Australian history", in Catharine Coleborne and Dolly MacKinnon, eds, *"Madness" in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2003), p. 29; Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 175; Gerald N. Grob, *The mad among us: a history of the care of America's mentally ill* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 159; Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, pp. 632-33.

⁷ Garton, *Medicine and madness*, pp. 57-9; Ross Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots: eugenic legislation in Victoria, 1918-1939", *Australian Historical Studies*, 30, 113 (1999), p. 331; Edgar Schuster, *Eugenics* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1912), p. 17; Diana Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness: eugenics in Australia, 1910s to 1930s*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1996, p. 313.

The overlapping membership of many eugenics and mental hygiene organisations suggests that eugenicists did not view agencies focusing on improving the environment as being incompatible with the aims of eugenics.⁸ Many in the mental hygiene movement advocated the segregation and sterilisation of the "unfit", as well as more ostensibly environmental programs such as mental testing for school children.⁹ The combination of a belief in the hereditary transmission of mental illness with a faith that environment and education could, to some extent, counterbalance "bad" heredity was typical of psychiatric theory in Australia in the 1930s.¹⁰ The mental hygiene movement was concerned with the debilitating influence of modern society on the mental health of its citizens. Both the mental hygiene and the eugenics movements encouraged attempts to strengthen mental health in order to withstand the pressures of modern civilisation, and both believed in educating individuals to lead efficient and useful lives.¹¹

The medical profession in Queensland, like those in other states of Australia, had been advocating early or preventive treatment, and campaigning for legislative change to facilitate this, since the early

⁸ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 170; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 323; Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 131; Michael Roe, *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 14; and Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 320.

⁹ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 177; Grant Rodwell, "Professor Harvey Sutton: national hygienist as eugenicist and educator", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, 2 (1998), pp. 165-66; Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 165-66, 292-96.

¹⁰ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 51.

¹¹ Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 11-12; Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 167, 176-77.

1900s.¹² The in-patient facilities established for early treatment at Brisbane Hospital were not successful, however, and many patients were rapidly transferred to Goodna Asylum.¹³ The campaign for early and preventive treatment was related to attempts by the profession to remove the stigma attached to a diagnosis of mental illness. It was hoped that the admission of psychiatric patients to general hospitals would emphasise that mental illness was no different to physical illness.¹⁴ The medical profession in Queensland was enthusiastic about the mental hygiene movement.¹⁵

The rise in popularity of the mental hygiene movement coincided with a greater interest in the treatment and control of the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired in Queensland. It was shown in Chapter Two that health care generally, and mental health care in particular, were neglected in Queensland for most of the early twentieth century.¹⁶ This situation was changing by 1930. The years immediately preceding World

¹² Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry and its establishment in Queensland", p. 497. This was similar to the situation in the rest of Australia (Stephen Garton, "Freud and the psychiatrists: the Australian debate 1900 to 1940", in Brian Head and James Walter, eds, *Intellectual movements and Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 177-79).

¹³ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 38.

¹⁴ Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry", p. 498.

¹⁵ P. K. Jordan, "Health and social welfare", in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, eds, *Labor in power: the Labor Party and governments in Queensland 1915-1957* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 321.

¹⁶ Raymond Evans, "The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland", in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), pp. 80-2; Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), p. 108; Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 47; Ross Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1987), pp. 32-3, 45-8.

War II marked the beginning of a period of advancement in the area of mental health in Queensland.¹⁷ In 1932, the Queensland Labor government, under the leadership of William Forgan Smith, undertook a series of long-overdue health reforms, culminating in the 1938 mental health legislation.¹⁸ The main architect of the reforms was E. M. Hanlon, the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, working in close consultation with Dr Raphael Cilento, who in 1934 became the Director-General of Health and Medical Services.¹⁹ Both Hanlon and Cilento were enthusiastic in promoting and carrying out their ideas.

By 1930, the belief that there was a hereditary link between mental "deficiency" and social problems such as poverty, prostitution and crime was firmly established in Queensland debate. H. Byam Ellerton, the Inspector of Asylums, continued to be one of the main purveyors of these ideas. In 1932, in a memorandum on the subject of prostitution and the spread of venereal disease, he professed his opinion that "it is generally accepted that ... the women who indulge in prostitution are more or less below the average standard of mentality".²⁰ Although Ellerton had a longstanding interest in this topic, and the problems he believed to be associated with it, his interest became more marked after 1930. In his

¹⁷ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 131.

¹⁸ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, pp. 110-12. These reforms represented one aspect of the implementation of Labor's policy of centralising control of the health services in the state (Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 40).

¹⁹ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, pp. 98-103.

²⁰ H. Byam Ellerton, Inspector of Insane Asylums to Home Secretary, 24 October 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

annual report for 1934, he included tables showing the proportion of both the insane, and the mentally "defective", to the population.²¹ Although in the first table he only included statistics for Queensland, in the second, he included a comparison of mental defectives in all Australian states, and in Britain. Although he did not comment on these tables, their inclusion indicates that the problem was weighing on his mind.²²

Ellerton's interest in what he believed to be the increasing proportion of mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults must be seen in the context of correspondence between Ellerton and the Home Secretary, J. C. Peterson, in 1931. Ellerton wrote to ask "whether you would kindly ascertain from the Crown Solicitor and advise me regarding the legality, or otherwise, of a surgical operation by a medical officer to sterilise a female".²³ The woman in question was awaiting discharge, and Ellerton was not prepared to grant permission for it until he received a reply to his query, clearly hoping to make it conditional upon the operation. The Crown Solicitor advised Ellerton that there was no law permitting sterilisation in Queensland.²⁴ Ellerton, however, appeared to be reluctant to accept this as a final answer; he replied to this advice with a further

²¹ Ellerton, "Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1933-4", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), pp. 848-49.

²² In the same year, a ward for imbecile children was built at the Ipswich asylum (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (25 October 1934), p. 965).

²³ Ellerton, Inspector of Asylums, to J. C. Peterson, Home Secretary, 15 October 1931, in-letter 6495 of 1931, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴ Peterson to Ellerton, 30 October 1931, in-letter 6495 of 1931, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

letter to Peterson, asking "whether there is any law in force in Queensland *prohibiting* sterilisation" [emphasis added].²⁵ This points to a problem in ascertaining the influence of eugenic thinking in the sterilisation debate in Queensland. It is possible that some operations were performed to sterilise hospital inmates, without specific legislation ever being passed, a fact which makes it impossible to quantify these operations, or to examine the motivation behind them.²⁶ Ellerton's inquiries into the legality of sterilisation did not lead to a great deal of debate within the Queensland government. There is no record of a reply to his second letter, requesting information on whether sterilisation was prohibited.

A further possibility must be considered in relation to discussions about sterilisation at this time, and that is that the word was occasionally used as a euphemism for castration.²⁷ In 1934, the *Telegraph* reported that, in

²⁵ Ellerton to Home Secretary, 2 November 1931, in-letter 6495 of 1931, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

²⁶ Stephen Garton argues in "Sound minds and healthy bodies" that it is probable that operations for sterilisation were performed in New South Wales without explicit permission (p. 164).

²⁷ Daniel J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics: genetics and the uses of human heredity* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 108. In Danish legislation for sterilisation between 1929 and 1934, there was some overlapping of these two categories of operation. See Bent Sigurd Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark: eugenics and the ascent of the welfare state", in Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the welfare state: sterilization policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), pp. 39-41. Donald K. Pickens argued that many American supporters of sterilisation focused on a punitive, rather than a therapeutic, rationale for sterilisation, that is, that they advocated castration (*Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), pp. 88-92. Robert Guthrie contended that sterilisation legislation passed in many American states was vague as to whether the purpose of the legislation was primarily eugenic or punitive (*Even the rat was white: a historical view of psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 87-8). Lesley Hall states that even many doctors used the words interchangeably (*Sex gender and social change in Britain since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 119).

a first for the state, a man convicted of a sexual offence was given the choice of jail or sterilisation.²⁸ In July 1934, the Secretary of the Australian Labor Party in Mt Isa wrote to the Attorney General, informing him that the branch had passed a resolution at its last meeting requesting legislation providing for the "complete sterilisation of persons convicted of debasing sex crimes upon children of tender years".²⁹ Both these items, while clearly referring to the possibility of castration as a punishment for sexual offenses, used the term *sterilisation*, and were preserved in the government file relating to sterilisation for mental deficiency. It is likely, however, that this was merely due to the convenience of the phrase. It must be considered that, at times, the word *sterilisation* was used to mean castration.³⁰ It is clear, however, that Ellerton was not using the term in this way. During the early 1930s, a debate over the possibility of sterilisation for mental disorder took place within the Queensland government and public service. This debate was explicitly focused on sterilisation as a method of treatment and control of mental "defectives", and during it, mental "defectives" were frequently identified as a threat to racial fitness.

In 1932, the Labor government, newly returned to power after a brief period of conservative rule, began an investigation into the possibility of

²⁸ Newspaper clipping, in-letter 417 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹ G. A. Groth, Secretary of the ALP, Mt Isa to J. Mullan, Attorney General, Brisbane, 13 July 1934, in-letter 6590 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

³⁰ Much of the difference depended on whether the debate was focused on men or women (Braslow, *Mental ills*, pp. 62-3).

sterilisation for mental deficiency. Although no such legislation was ever drafted in Queensland, ideas raised in the course of this discussion were influential on the 1938 legislation on mental hygiene and backward persons. The specific event that initiated this debate in Queensland was the establishment in Britain of the Departmental Committee on Sterilisation, headed by L. G. Brock. This committee, formed in 1932, was set up to examine the hereditary transmission of mental disorder and deficiency and the value of sterilisation in such cases.³¹ Its establishment was, in part, the result of a renewed campaign by the English Eugenics Society for the sterilisation of mental defectives.³² Part of the committee's investigations involved ascertaining the existence of legislation for sterilisation in other countries, particularly the dominions.³³ The inquiry sent to Queensland led to a period of debate within the Queensland government over the possibility of establishing some form of legalised sterilisation for mental deficiency in the state. Ultimately, no such laws were ever passed, but the debate itself reveals a great deal about the widespread influence of eugenic ideology.

³¹ "Report of the Departmental Committee on Sterilisation", forwarded from Downing Street to the Governor, Queensland, circular despatch 32, 2 February 1934, in-letter 4485, A/12219, Queensland State Archives.

³² One of the reasons that the report focused on voluntary sterilisation was in order to disassociate it from extremists (Hall, *Sex gender and social change*, pp. 118-19). See also Moira Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding: the Mental Deficiency Bill in Western Australia, 1929", in Penelope Hetherington, ed., *Childhood and society in Western Australia* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988), p. 146.

³³ Sankey, Dominions Office, Downing Street to Governor Wilson, Brisbane, circular despatch 204, 8 August 1932, in-letter 380 of 1932, A/12216, Queensland State Archives.

The circular sent out to all the dominion countries arrived in Queensland on 8 August 1932. It posed four main questions relating to the hereditary transmission of mental disorder and deficiency, and the value of sterilisation. The questions were as follows: the first asked if there was any legislation in place, and if so, what type of patients were sterilised, and whose consent was required; the second asked if there was legislation in place that had become obsolete, and if so, why; the third asked what social effects, as well as effects on the health of the patients, any legislation had; and finally, if no legislation was in place, whether any had been discussed.³⁴ In addition to these main questions, the committee sought further information on whether such operations caused any suffering to the patients, and whether the operation was always voluntary, or if there were some cases in which it could be ordered by an authority, and also what the safeguards were against abuse.

The committee was particularly interested in whether sterilisation had enabled mental defectives to be discharged when they would otherwise have had to be segregated, and whether the discharge of women known to be sterilised had led to any perceptible increase in prostitution or the spread of venereal diseases. This final question clearly referred to the belief that mental "defectives" were inherently more promiscuous than

³⁴ Sankey to Wilson, circular despatch 204, 8 August 1932, in-letter 380 of 1932, in-letter 380, A/12216, Queensland State Archives.

those of "normal" mentality, and consequent fears that by sterilising them, such behaviour would be encouraged.³⁵ It also reflected the tendency for such debates to target women.³⁶ The only category that applied in Queensland was the final one of the four main questions, since no legislation relating to the sterilisation of either the mentally ill or the mentally defective had ever been passed in the state. In order to reply to this question, the government requested the opinion of three public servants with medical expertise.³⁷ Although their opinions varied, they all expressed support for the sterilisation of mental defectives, at least in principle. The government also requested the official advice of the Queensland branch of the British Medical Association (BMA), although they were more cautious in replying.³⁸

The first expert consulted was Ellerton, in his capacity as Inspector of Insane Asylums. Given his longstanding support for sterilisation, it is not surprising that Ellerton contended that "it would be desirable to sterilise all patients who had suffered mental illness in order to prevent pro-

³⁵ Raymond L. Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government to 1919*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1970, p. 129; Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Introduction", in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 5-6; Schuster, *Eugenics*, pp. 172-73.

³⁶ Rosemary Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness' in early twentieth-century New South Wales", in Jane Long, Jan Gothard and Helen Brash, eds, *Forging identities: bodies, gender and feminist history* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1997), p. 218; Anna Haebich, *Broken circles: fragmenting indigenous families 1800-2000* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000), p. 271; Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion*, pp. 195-96.

³⁷ Home Secretary to Director of Education, 10 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932; Home Secretary to Commissioner of Public Health, 10 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932; Home Secretary to Inspector of Asylums, Goodna, 10 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

³⁸ Home Secretary to British Medical Association (Queensland), 28 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

creation.”³⁹ This was a fairly extreme view, and one that did not distinguish between mental deficiency and mental illness. Although Ellerton used the phrase *mental illness*, and did not specifically mention mental deficiency, it is reasonable in view of the terms of the inquiry, and other statements made by him, to assume that he meant mental “defectives” to be included. John Coffey, the Commissioner of Public Health, was somewhat more circumspect. Coffey argued that because there was not enough information about the transmission of “abnormal conditions of mind and body”, and many environmental factors could “lead to diseased conditions which may be mistaken as inherited”, he was not entirely convinced that many diseases were hereditarily transmissible.⁴⁰ Despite this, he did not believe that either education or restrictive legislation were effective in preventing the “propagation of defectives”.⁴¹ Segregation and surgery were ideal solutions in theory, but presented practical difficulties in deciding to whom these options should be applied. Thus, he supported sterilisation in theory, but only under “conditions that make abuses virtually impossible”; and such conditions were very difficult to attain.⁴²

³⁹ Ellerton to Home Secretary, 14 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁰ John Coffey, Commissioner of Public Health to Home Secretary, 24 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁴¹ Coffey to Home Secretary, 24 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁴² Coffey to Home Secretary, 24 November 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

The third expert questioned by the government was L. St. Vincent Welch, the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Public Instruction. Welch regarded the question of sterilisation as part of a controversial and wide-ranging discussion, and expressed his concern over the increasing problem of mental deficient in Queensland society.⁴³ He also claimed that the increase of such people could be attributed in part to contemporary advances in sanitation and preventive medicine, arguing that more "deficients" had died of natural causes in previous centuries, whereas in the twentieth century, their life-span had been prolonged. Welch's sentiments were markedly similar to eugenic propaganda in Britain and America.⁴⁴ In fact, his language was more intemperate than Ellerton's, although his recommendations were ostensibly more conservative. He stated that he did not advocate sterilisation as a solution except in rare cases, citing the current lack of knowledge about the hereditary transmission of mental defect, and the difficulty of accurately judging mental deficiency as reasons for such caution. He cited the cases in which he believed that sterilisation would be of value as being those of sex offenders of low mentality, or those with hereditarily transmissible congenital sight or hearing defects who wished to marry.

⁴³ L. St Vincent Welch, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Public Instruction to Home Secretary, 22 December 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁴ One of the main tenets of the eugenics movement was the application of the laws of evolution to daily life, and the related concern that modern medicine was interfering with natural selection. See, for example, Francis Galton, *Inquiries into human faculty and its development* (London: J. M. Dent, [1907]), pp. 1, 94-5. A preoccupation with "useless" life was one of the characteristics of the German eugenics movement (Michael Burleigh, *Ethics and extermination: reflections on Nazi genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 117-18).

Welch's caution in advocating sterilisation seems to be somewhat undermined by his advocacy of the procedure for two such vastly different groups. To advocate sterilisation for two such disparate groups of problems would seem to open up the possibility of a much greater scope for the procedure, despite his words of caution:

To sum up, I am in favour of sterilisation in all cases in which it is indubitably proved that such procedure would be advantageous to the Nation and at the same time subjected the patient to no risk of life [but overall], ... Segregation is the lesser of two evils.⁴⁵

The Queensland branch of the British Medical Association was cautious in replying to these inquiries. It convened a special committee to discuss the question, but found little material with which to compile a report.⁴⁶ Almost a year later, the association was still "not in a position to make any pronouncement on the matter".⁴⁷ A handwritten note on this file notes the reluctance, asking: "Why not a definite pronouncement?" Early in 1934, the Minister for Health in New South Wales wrote to the Queensland Home Secretary, Hanlon, regarding this report, news of which had been published in the Sydney press, and requested copies for the New South Wales Health Department.⁴⁸ By February 1934, the

⁴⁵ Welch to Home Secretary, 22 December 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁶ Kenneth Wilson, Secretary, British Medical Association (Queensland) to Home Secretary, 27 February 1933, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives. The association stated that more information on the hereditary transmission of mental disorder was needed before it was prepared to express an opinion.

⁴⁷ Wilson to Home Secretary, 1 December 1933, in-letter 8265 of 1933, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁸ Minister for Health, Sydney to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 11 January 1934, in-letter 417 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

Queensland government was becoming impatient, and appealed to the association for an "early pronouncement", due to the importance of the subject.⁴⁹ The association, however, appeared to be waiting for the report of the English committee before forming an opinion.⁵⁰ This circumspection may have been partly due to conflict which had arisen between the association and the Queensland government in 1930 over a report on the Royal Commission on Hospitals.⁵¹ It is also possible, however, that the Queensland branch did not want to express an unsanctioned opinion on a controversial subject, and was seeking advice from either their national or international counterparts. They never expressed an official opinion on the subject, even after the publication of the Brock report.⁵²

The government's inquiries were noted by the *Courier Mail*, which reported in 1934 on the interest of the Home Department, and the report that the British Medical Association was supposed to be preparing.⁵³ The newspaper reported that the Association for the Welfare of Mental Deficients primarily recommended segregation for mental defectives. It also, however, quoted the Association's president, Mrs H. A. Longman, as

⁴⁹ Home Secretary to British Medical Association (Queensland), 6 February 1934, in-letter 417 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁵⁰ Wilson, Secretary, British Medical Association (Queensland) to Home Secretary, 12 February 1934, in-letter 417 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁵¹ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, pp. 110-11.

⁵² Hanlon did not request further information on their position, as the Queensland government had decided not to pursue inquiries on the subject (Newspaper clipping, "Sterilisation inquiry: no further report requested: scanty information here", in-letter 417 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives).

⁵³ "Sterilising the unfit: Queensland enquiries: B. M. A. report", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 11.

recommending sterilisation "in those few cases, which would not be a menace if living in the community and did not need care in an institution".⁵⁴ Longman said that this position was supported by a British Medical Association report issued in London in 1932. The *Courier Mail* stated that the report had concluded that if the unfit were generally sterilised and then released into the community, "they would not be able to care for themselves, and would be a greater menace than previously."⁵⁵

The tone of these statements indicates a significant change from earlier reports. Although discussions in the press about the mentally defective in Queensland before 1930 were tinged by anxiety, discussions after 1930 carried a much greater sense of urgency. This was reflected most noticeably in the use of the word *menace* to describe feeble-minded adults in this article, a tendency that was increasing in the 1930s. This report also shows, however, that sterilisation was not universally supported as a solution.⁵⁶ The Association for the Welfare of Mental Deficients was clearly concerned about social control, and the impact of mental defectives on the community, as well as with the future of the race. These fears were related to beliefs about the promiscuity of mental "defectives", and fears that if they were sterilised and allowed to live in the community

⁵⁴ "Sterilising the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 11.

⁵⁵ "Sterilising the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 11.

⁵⁶ Braslow asserts that many eugenicists in fact disapproved of the sterilisation of mental defectives (*Mental ills and bodily cures*, p. 62). See also Castel, Castel and Lovell, *The psychiatric society*, p. 48.

they would spread venereal disease.⁵⁷ The ideas expressed in this article were similar in kind to previous opinions, but conveyed a greater sense of the imminent threat posed by "defectives". This interpretation is supported by further concerns stated by Longman. These included the argument that the state government was spending too much money maintaining mentally deficient children in institutions, where they "mixed with normal children", and also that a large percentage of adults in jails were there through mental deficiency.⁵⁸ Longman hoped that the government would soon establish a proper home for mental defectives in Queensland, particularly with the current interest in the subject: "Therefore, it would be just as well for the Government to provide suitable homes for those people, and segregate them."⁵⁹ Thus, segregation, both from the community and from other types of social disorder, was once again cited as the solution to the problem of mental deficiency. Segregation, in contrast to sterilisation, was believed to work both in maintaining social control, and in preventing reproduction.⁶⁰

By the end of 1934, the *Courier Mail* reported that the "weight of informed medical opinion" was against the compulsory sterilisation of the

⁵⁷ Carol Bacchi, "The nature-nurture debate in Australia, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 19, 75 (1980), p. 202; Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 218; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 53, 107-8; Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion*, pp. 195-96; Rafter, *White trash*, pp. 5-6; Schuster, *Eugenics*, pp. 172-73.

⁵⁸ "Sterilising the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 11.

⁵⁹ "Sterilising the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 11.

⁶⁰ "The Eugenics Congress", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 7; "Improvement of the race", *The Times* (London), 2 June 1911, p. 6; Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 220; Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating born criminals* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 7.

unfit, at least in Victoria.⁶¹ The newspaper stated that "Eminent alienists who addressed the Victorian Council for Mental Hygiene last night showed themselves strongly opposed to sterilisation", on humanitarian grounds.⁶² A Dr Dane "declared compulsory sterilisation to be an unscientific hit-or-miss method, which could do little good, and might wreck [sic] the gravest injustice upon innocent persons."⁶³ He also said that although mental deficiency was more marked among slum dwellers, it was not possible to say to what extent this was due to heredity; environment undoubtedly played an important part. According to Dane, the "extent of mental deficiency generally and its dangers to the nation had been exaggerated", and "it would take an immensely long time to totally eradicate all mental defectives by sterilisation."⁶⁴ Dr J. Catarenich, the superintendent of Mont Park Mental Hospital, said that if sterilisation was considered necessary, it would have to be performed on forty percent of the population.⁶⁵ Earlier in the year, the Sydney press had also reported on the lack of support for sterilisation expressed in Victoria, specifically by Dr W. Ernest Jones, the Director of Mental Hygiene in the state.⁶⁶ This range of views shows an interesting ambivalence about sterilisation. On one hand, there was an acknowledgement that scientific consensus about the inheritance of

⁶¹ "Sterilisation of unfit: opposed by doctors in Victoria", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 December 1934, p. 8.

⁶² "Sterilisation of unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 December 1934, p. 8.

⁶³ "Sterilisation of unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 December 1934, p. 8.

⁶⁴ "Sterilisation of unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 December 1934, p. 8.

⁶⁵ "Sterilisation of unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 December 1934, p. 8.

⁶⁶ "Mental defectives", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 May 1934, p. 10.

mental deficiency had not been reached, and that the threat to the nation from mental deficiency has been exaggerated. On the other, there was the practical concern that sterilisation was not efficient.

The attitudes represented in these articles may indicate why the British Medical Association was so cautious in responding to the inquiries of the government, and also why the government itself was not eager to introduce legislation for sterilisation. There is evidence, however, that the Queensland government was at least interested in sterilisation as a potential solution to the problem of the feeble-minded. In addition to the inquiries made following the request from Downing Street, the Queensland Home Secretary's Office collected the 1933 report of the Human Betterment Foundation, a eugenic organisation based in California.⁶⁷ The 1933 report contained a table of official sterilisations in America, which showed that sterilisations had increased dramatically since 1930.⁶⁸ The report concluded that "Presumably this indicates that the public, in many states, is becoming better educated on this problem."⁶⁹ In a list of twelve benefits (although the more neutral term *effects* was used in the report, it was clearly an attempt to outline the benefits of sterilisation), the twelfth was listed as "It [sterilisation] is a

⁶⁷ The Human Betterment Foundation was established by E. S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe; it pressed for both compulsory and voluntary sterilisation for a variety of conditions believed to be inherited (Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 94-5).

⁶⁸ E. S. Gosney, President, The Human Betterment Foundation, "Report to all our correspondents", California to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 16 August 1933, in-letter 8265 of 1933, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁶⁹ Gosney, "Report to all our correspondents", 16 August 1933, in-letter 8265 of 1933, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

practical and necessary step to prevent racial deterioration."⁷⁰ Other effects included the "protection" of children from being brought up by mentally deficient parents or the state, and the removal of a burden from taxpayers.⁷¹

This report included many of the hallmarks of eugenic propaganda. Not only was sterilisation advocated as a means of preventing racial deterioration, there was an unquestioned assumption that the better educated society was, the more sterilisation would be accepted.⁷² Finally, the argument that mental "defectives" would become a burden on taxpayers if their reproduction was not checked was typical of much eugenic writing.⁷³ A pamphlet on human sterilisation was enclosed with the report. While this material was not produced by the Queensland government, it is worth noting the sections in the pamphlet that were underlined by the Home Secretary's Office, indicating a level of interest. These underlined sections related to the threat of racial degeneration if

⁷⁰ Gosney, "Report to all our correspondents", 16 August 1933, in-letter 8265 of 1933, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁷¹ Gosney, "Report to all our correspondents", 16 August 1933, in-letter 8265 of 1933, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁷² A belief that sterilisation was necessary to prevent racial deterioration was more pronounced among American eugenicists than British: Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 47-8, 93-4; Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi connection: eugenics, American racism, and German National Socialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 42-8; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 91-2.

⁷³ Mary Cawte, "Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency", *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986) p. 40; Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland government, p. 129. For examples see Schuster, *Eugenics*, pp. 172-73; George Benstead, Principal, Special School for Boys, Otekaiki to R. H. W. Bligh, Lecturer, White Cross League, Invercargill, 30 July 1917, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

sterilisation was not introduced, and the good effects of sterilisation, as well as the cost of keeping mental defectives.

In 1933, the *Daily Standard* reported on the debate over the question of sterilisation, claiming that Hanlon would have community support, "if he introduced legislation which would lead to the prevention of the perpetuation of mental defectiveness and insanity in families."⁷⁴ It also discussed a Federal Health Council report which found that sterilisation in other countries was not always carried out for eugenic purposes, but rather was sometimes performed for penal or therapeutic reasons. It continued that, according to Dr F. R. Kerr, the author of the report, the latter reasons "were far less important than eugenic sterilisation, which aimed at a gradual elimination from the race of all harmful and dysgenic elements by preventing individuals with inherited defects from reproducing their kind."⁷⁵ The argument that where public opinion was educated there would be little opposition to sterilisation was again put forward. Kerr used the results of intelligence tests to support his point, and further argued that every civilised nation had to accept that the birth-rate was declining amongst the best and increasing amongst the

⁷⁴ Newspaper clipping, "Mental defectives: interesting report to federal health council", *Daily Standard*, 27 May 1933, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁵ "Mental defectives", *Daily Standard*, 27 May 1933, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

worst. He concluded: "The obvious solution, if the race was not to degenerate, was to increase births amongst the superior stocks".⁷⁶

The government also kept a large number of newspaper clippings on the subject of sterilisation. Many of these clippings were related to current legislation in Germany. An article from the *Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette* was critical of this legislation, describing the fact that potential candidates could be proposed by the governors of penal establishments as "a provision of grave implication in view of the large numbers of persons now suffering imprisonment without trial in Germany".⁷⁷ It is interesting, however, that no similar sentiments were expressed about the fact that medical officers could suggest inmates of hospitals. The criticism of German policy was in contrast to interstate press coverage of the legislation.⁷⁸ In 1933, the *Star*, a Melbourne newspaper, reported on the German legislation approvingly, repeating the assertion of the German government that although the sterilisation program would cost £700, 000, this was "offset by the fact that the country is spending £18, 000, 000 a year on the care of mental patients."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ "Mental defectives", *Daily Standard*, 27 May 1933, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁷ Newspaper clipping, in-letter 417 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁸ Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots, p. 341.

⁷⁹ Newspaper clipping, "Sterilisation for 400, 000: Germany's mass health plan", *Star* (Melbourne), 21 December 1933, in-letter 6590 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

During the 1930s debate about the sterilisation of the mentally "unfit", most of the participants were either members of parliament or public servants. Interest in the subject, however, was not entirely confined to these groups. The Women's Electoral League in Queensland passed a resolution during their Sixth Triennial State Conference in 1933 that "steps should be taken to procure the sterilisation of the mentally incurable."⁸⁰ This resolution was in line with the position of the Federal council of the National Council of Women, held in Western Australia in September 1929, which issued a statement claiming that "So long as they live, mental deficientes are a menace to themselves and others."⁸¹ In Victoria, middle class women's groups openly supported legislation for the sterilisation and segregation of mental defectives.⁸² In 1934, during the time that sterilisation was being debated by the Queensland government, the *Courier Mail* published a letter to the editor from Pattie Soutter in Annerley, entitled "Sterilisation of the unfit".⁸³ This letter was much less cautious than any of the official pronouncements on the subject of sterilisation. Soutter argued that the problem should be approached firstly from the humanitarian and social points of view, and then the scientific one, and that care should be taken to prevent any interference with the liberty of the subject, unless action were "authorised by competent judges for the public welfare."⁸⁴ Women,

⁸⁰ Edith Dargen, General Secretary, Women's Electoral League to the Home Secretary, 10 October 1933, in-letter 8265, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁸¹ Quoted in Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", p. 147.

⁸² Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 327.

⁸³ "Sterilisation of the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 10.

⁸⁴ "Sterilisation of the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 10.

according to Soutter, were especially interested in this cause and could easily accomplish the preliminary work. Soutter described women's special interest in the subject as follows:

Who can describe a woman's joy when a bright, healthy babe ... is placed in her sheltering arms, a pledge of love and honest worth? Who can convey to the mind her grief and agony when her offspring is given to her branded with the curse of ages in all its pitiful helplessness. That almost the whole world is now moved to endeavour to remedy this long-drawn-out evil is attributable to woman's work since the war. Now that woman has a voice she may be able to greatly regenerate our stricken world. The women of Australia have a great work before them: let them go on as they have begun and they will leave the world better than they found it.⁸⁵

This passage is representative of those who felt that women had a particular interest in eugenic concerns, in their role as mothers.⁸⁶

Interest in sterilisation and racial fitness was an international phenomenon during the early 1930s, and was particularly apparent among psychiatrists.⁸⁷ A newspaper clipping from the *Mail*, kept in the

⁸⁵ "Sterilisation of the unfit", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 10 January 1934, p. 10.

⁸⁶ Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and reproductive imperatives", in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, eds, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), p. 168; George Robb "Eugenics, spirituality and sex differentiation in Edwardian England: the case of Frances Swiney", *Journal of Women's History*, 10, 3 (1998), p. 97; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 65-7; Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 14-15; C. W. Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture: an outline of eugenics* (London: Cassell, 1909), p. xiv.

⁸⁷ Gotz Aly, Peter Chroust and Christian Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi medicine and racial hygiene* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 3; Burleigh, *Ethics and extermination*, pp. 115-17; Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", pp. 44-6; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 116-17; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4, 54; Angus McLaren, "The creation of a haven for 'human thoroughbreds': the sterilization of the feeble-minded and the mentally ill in British Columbia", *Canadian Historical Review*, 62, 2 (1986), pp. 127-150.

government file on sterilisation for mental disorder, reported that operations for the sterilisation of mental "defectives" in Switzerland had been carried out in the country since 1879. The newspaper stated that the procedure was used in the out-patient treatment of the early stages of insanity. It further revealed that the procedure was carried out without legislation, quoting a Professor Hans Maier, the Director of Zurich Mental Hospital, who claimed that Switzerland's well-educated population and personal contact between physicians and local administrators had "facilitated sterilisation without definite legislation".⁸⁸ In addition to international debate on sterilisation, many reforms influenced by the mental hygiene movement were undertaken internationally, as well as in Australia and Queensland, during the 1930s.⁸⁹ Traditional opponents of eugenics, including the labour movement and the Catholic church, were also opposed to mental hygiene reforms, possibly due to the association between mental hygiene and eugenics.⁹⁰

In 1934, the British committee on sterilisation reported to the government, and drafted a bill on the voluntary sterilisation of mental

⁸⁸ Newspaper clipping, "Sterilisation: over 50 years: Swiss disclosures", *Mail*, 17 December 1933, in-letter 6590 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁸⁹ Margaret Conley, "Citizens – protect your birthright!: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), pp. 10-11; Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 164, 181; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 319-42; Fitzpatrick, "Preventing the unfit from breeding", pp. 144-60.

⁹⁰ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 181. For Catholic and labour opposition to eugenics see Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", p. 51; William H. Schneider, *Quality and quantity: the quest for biological regeneration in twentieth century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3; Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness*, p. 314.

"defectives".⁹¹ The report dismissed many of the more extreme eugenist arguments about the swamping of society by "defective" children, but concluded that the number of mental "defectives" in the community was a cause for concern.⁹² It also pointed out that there were both hereditary and environmental factors involved in the causation of mental defect, and that in considering sterilisation, it should be remembered that very few "defectives" had parents who were also "defective".⁹³ Despite this fact, which meant that "the elimination of defect must be a comparatively slow process", the report stated categorically that "No mentally defective person ... is fit to bring up children. *No defective person should therefore become a parent* [emphasis in original]".⁹⁴ The report also mentioned the high cost of caring for mental "defectives", and the "many indirect ways" in which these people supposedly constituted a "financial burden on the community."⁹⁵

The debate over sterilisation diminished in Queensland after the Brock report.⁹⁶ In 1935, there was a minor amendment to the *Insanity Act* of

⁹¹ Hall, *Sex gender and social change*, pp. 118-19; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 166.

⁹² Memorandum upon a Permissive Bill to legalise the Voluntary Sterilization of certain Mental Defectives, p. 2, enclosed with J. H. Thomas, Downing St to Governor, Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, Brisbane, 27 March 1934, in-letter 2672 of 1934, circular despatch 32, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁹³ Memorandum upon a Permissive Bill, p. 3, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁹⁴ Memorandum upon a Permissive Bill, p. 3, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁹⁵ Memorandum upon a Permissive Bill, p. 3, in-letter 2672 of 1934, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

⁹⁶ "Report of the Departmental Committee on Sterilisation", circular despatch 32, 2 February 1934, in-letter 4485, A/12219, Queensland State Archives. This was similar to the situation in Britain: C. P. Blacker, Eugenics Society, London to V. H. Wallace,

1884, but it was not related to the debate about sterilisation.⁹⁷ In 1937, Ellerton retired, and was replaced by Basil Stafford, who was also the deputy Director-General of Health and Medical Services.⁹⁸ The information gathered by the Queensland government during the debate, however, was later used in drafting the two 1938 acts related to mental health: the *Mental Hygiene Act* and the *Backward Persons Act*. These acts were the final stage of a series of reforms of the health care system in Queensland, and Hanlon, Cilento and Stafford worked closely together in their preparation.⁹⁹ In his notes on the Mental Hygiene Bill, Hanlon stated that the two acts together would represent the completion of "the efforts of the Government to provide a co-ordinated Health Service to all branches of the community, in all classes of illness whether mental or physical."¹⁰⁰

Several articles on the problems of mentally "unfit" adults, and particularly mental defectives, appeared in the Queensland press in 1938, some before the mental health legislation was introduced into parliament. In September, the *Courier Mail* published an opinion piece written by Professor Murdoch,¹⁰¹ entitled "The moron: a political

Eugenics Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 11 October 1938, SA/EUG Box 48, E3, Wellcome Institute Library, London.

⁹⁷ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 78.

⁹⁸ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 131.

⁹⁹ Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, pp. 110-12; Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ Mental Hygiene Bill 1938, p. 10, A/27293, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰¹ This was almost certainly Sir Walter Logie Forbes Murdoch, the founding professor of the University of Western Australia, and a popular and prolific newspaper essayist. Murdoch's opinion pieces were widely syndicated (Bede Nairn and Geoffrey

proposal", in which he discussed the problems of modern society, and more particularly what he considered to be

... the oldest [problem] of all; and to the best of my belief it lies at the root of all the rest. If we could solve it, the solution of all the rest would soon follow. If we fail to solve it the rest are insoluble.¹⁰²

Murdoch continued that despite the magnitude of this problem, he was unable to state it directly at the beginning of his article, for fear of scaring away his readers. Instead, he had to begin by discussing something else; "at least, it looks like something else." This "something else" was the undisputed value of intelligence tests.¹⁰³ According to Murdoch they had achieved such a high level of efficiency that he would like to see them applied to all political candidates. He argued that these tests had proved that no definite line could be drawn between different grades of mentality:

At the bottom you have the profound and hopeless idiot – the thing (for it cannot be called a person) which has been described as a mere bundle of living tissue without a mind; you rise, by gradual stages, to the imbecile, then to the feeble-minded, then to the dull and backward, then to the normal, then to the exceptionally bright, then to the genius, with no definite line ... [between grades].¹⁰⁴

Serle, eds, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 10 (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1986), pp. 630-32).

¹⁰² "The moron: a political proposal", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 September 1938, p. 6.

¹⁰³ Guthrie, *Even the rat was white*, pp. 84-5; Howard Horwitz, "Always with us", *American Literary History*, 10, 2 (1998), pp. 322, 332; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 322; Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 131.

¹⁰⁴ "The moron", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 September 1938, p. 6.

Murdoch was concerned only with the dull and backward group. He discussed the 1908 Royal Commission in the UK, and its findings on numbers of mental deficient, questioning whether the increase in numbers was continuing, and if numbers were also increasing in Australia, "And if so, what are we going to do about it?"¹⁰⁵ Finally, he reached the real point of his column. Murdoch argued that Australians could not afford to think of the feeble-minded as an American problem, stating that the majority of politicians in Australian parliament "undoubtedly belong to the group known to psychologists as 'dull and backward'."¹⁰⁶ Murdoch's article was clearly, in part, a satirical attack on politicians rather than a serious statement about mental defectives. Nevertheless, his "political proposal" was that, as the property qualification for voters had been abolished, intelligence tests should be utilised instead. He argued that since certified lunatics were not allowed to vote, the feeble-minded should also be prevented from doing so, concluding: "This, you will say, is a bad joke; it is not even a good one; it is a perfectly serious proposal."¹⁰⁷ While the seriousness of Murdoch's article is debatable, his description of mental defectives as little more than "things", and his statements about the increasing urgency of the problem were doubtless influenced by contemporary views, and would have contributed to a certain perception of these people that was increasing in Queensland in the late 1930s.

¹⁰⁵ "The moron", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 September 1938, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ "The moron", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 September 1938, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ "The moron", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 September 1938, p. 6.

In October, the *Courier Mail* reported on a plan to cope with mental defectives, outlined by Dr John Bostock at the annual meeting of the Association for the Welfare of Mental Deficients.¹⁰⁸ His plan included a comprehensive legal code, which, he argued, "must clarify the need to segregate or sterilise", as well as a psychological clinic to investigate all delinquents and borderline cases in law courts, children's courts, and schools.¹⁰⁹ Bostock stated that this problem was far more urgent than building roads or bridges:

It was both inhumane and futile, he said, to punish defectives who were constitutionally incapable of earning a livelihood by legitimate means or who were incapable of understanding the difference between right and wrong. ... There was an essential difference between the needs of the defective and the insane.¹¹⁰

The emphasis on the differences between the "defective" and the insane reflected the tendency, recently adopted in Queensland, to distinguish between these two groups. Bostock argued that mental defectives should be housed separately from the insane, criticising the current Queensland practice of placing them together as both unscientific and inhumane. He further argued that every "public-spirited citizen should be made to realise the pressing nature of the problem", and that every "deficient who

¹⁰⁸ "Psychological clinic urged: mental defectives treatment", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 4 October 1938, p. 18. Bostock was the co-author, with another psychiatrist, Dr Leslie Nye, of the 1934 work *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's national decline* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934).

¹⁰⁹ "Psychological clinic urged", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 4 October 1938, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ "Psychological clinic urged", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 4 October 1938, p. 18.

was to-day allowed to breed, to commit crimes, or be otherwise anti-social, carried in his being the seeds of a greater demoralisation tomorrow."¹¹¹ He criticised Queensland for being behind other Australian states in providing for mental deficient, and drew his audience's attention to the comments of judges when sentencing mental deficient, in order to make them "realise the sad future of the mental cripple."¹¹² The links between mental "deficiency" and crime, and the advocacy of the segregation of this group of people from the community and from the mentally ill were becoming common in Queensland debate by this time. There was an attitude in the press, sections of the community, and the government, that reform of mental health, and provision for mental defectives, were long overdue.

The government was anxious to portray its new legislation as modern and humanitarian. During the first reading of the Mental Hygiene Bill, Hanlon stressed the timely nature of the legislation, and expressed the belief that it would bring Queensland from being "hopelessly out of touch with modern developments in mental hygiene", to placing it ahead of the rest of Australia in provisions for the care of the mentally ill.¹¹³ Hanlon was also anxious to demonstrate that the government was applying the latest international ideas about mental health, mentioning during his introductory speeches to the readings of both the Mental Hygiene Bill

¹¹¹ "Psychological clinic urged", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 4 October 1938, p. 18.

¹¹² "Psychological clinic urged", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 4 October 1938, p. 18.

¹¹³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 948.

and the Backward Persons Bill that Stafford had advised the government on aspects of the legislation following a trip to Europe and America, during which he met with leading specialists from both continents, and attended a mental hygiene conference in Paris as the official Australian representative.¹¹⁴ The completed *Mental Hygiene Act* followed many provisions of the British *Mental Hygiene Act* of 1930.¹¹⁵

Hanlon introduced the Mental Hygiene Bill into Queensland Parliament on 14 October 1938, describing it as "a bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the care, treatment, and control of mentally sick persons."¹¹⁶ The main objectives of the act were to make provisions for early and preventive treatment of mental illness, and to change the terminology describing it. While the first objective received bipartisan support, both in parliament and the press, the second point was the cause of some controversy. Under the new act, all older terms such as "insane", "lunatic" and "unsound mind" were removed from legislation and were replaced with various permutations of the new term "mentally sick".¹¹⁷ The bill also contained provisions for admitting voluntary patients and changed the emphasis of treatment of mental patients to early treatment and preventive medicine.¹¹⁸ These provisions were clearly

¹¹⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 940.

¹¹⁵ Isdale, "The rise of psychiatry", p. 500.

¹¹⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 940. The bill repealed the earlier *Insanity Acts*, of 1884 and 1935.

¹¹⁷ *Mental Hygiene Act*, 1938, 2 Geo. 6 no. 21, s. 2.

¹¹⁸ Patrick has stated that this provision was a "decided success" (*A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 79).

influenced by the ideas of the mental hygiene movement. It was in these aspects of the bill that Hanlon saw its modernity; and indeed, the legislation did bring Queensland up to date with the latest ideas of mental hygiene and treatment of mental patients, although the claim that they were ahead of any other state in Australia was exaggerated.¹¹⁹ The provisions for voluntary patients received support and even praise from the opposition; it was the change in terminology that generated controversy. The removal of terms now considered outdated, and their replacement with the new, scientific language of mental illness and health was expected to effect a change in attitudes towards those newly termed mentally sick. The discussion of the Mental Hygiene Bill in Queensland parliament focused on language and its effect on attitudes and behaviour.

The debate over the "curable" versus the "incurable" population of mental institutions was central to the question of terminology in the legislation. The very fact that the new official term contained the word *sick* implied that the people who were referred to in the act could be cured. Hanlon expressed his belief that by changing terminology, the government was placing

... mental illness on the same plane in the minds of the people as physical illness, in order to make them realise that a mental illness may be treated successfully if attended to properly, like other forms of bodily illness.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Many of the provisions of the Queensland act were very similar to those of the Victorian *Mental Hygiene Act* of 1933 (Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 40).

¹²⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 940.

It was at this point, early in the debate, that Arthur Moore first spoke up; he was concerned with the fate of "those persons who eventually prove to be incurable".¹²¹ Hanlon's response was that "if they are not cured we have to care for them."¹²² However, while Hanlon may have felt that the answer to this question was self-evident, Moore apparently did not, as was revealed by his later statements advocating the sterilisation of mental "defectives".¹²³

For the most part, the bill received support from all parties in Queensland parliament. The majority of people who commented on the bill praised its humanitarian aims, and approved of the change in terminology.¹²⁴ John Duggan, the Labor member for Toowoomba, expressed his pleasure that steps were being taken to provide occupational therapy, particularly farm work, for the permanent inmates of mental institutions such as the one in his electorate, whom he described as "a group of people who appear to be forgotten by the majority in the community".¹²⁵ Herbert Yeates, the Country Party member for East Toowoomba, commended the bill, but advanced the argument that, since "prevention is better than cure", the government had better undertake "a thorough investigation into the causes of

¹²¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 940.

¹²² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 940.

¹²³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1801.

¹²⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 946.

¹²⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 942.

lunacy."¹²⁶ Yeates approved of the change from "insanity" to "mentally sick", calling it a "wise and humane thing", and stressed the "humanitarian point of view" in his speech.¹²⁷ He believed that in addition to the provisions of the bill, it was of very great importance that children should receive "proper" advice on sex and biology before they left school, and called for ministers of religion and the medical profession to provide advice on the topic, and possibly a printed booklet. It is more than likely that these provisions of the bill, and the statements in support of them, reflected the influence of the mental hygiene and eugenics movements in promoting the importance of sex education for the future good of the race. Many in these movements put at least equal priority on such education as they did on promoting legislation for the segregation or sterilisation of the "unfit".¹²⁸

Other parliamentarians argued that the strain of modern life was producing a greater number of mental disorders. This was a common idea at the time, and was a particular concern of both the mental hygiene and eugenics movements.¹²⁹ The influence of the Great War was considered particularly corrupting in terms of mental hygiene. George Taylor expressed these opinions when he stated that:

¹²⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 943.

¹²⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 943.

¹²⁸ "Eugenics for the young", *The Times* (London), 20 January 1912, p. 4; "Racial hygiene: menace of contagion", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1927, p. 12; Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 10; Grant Rodwell, "Curing the precocious masturbator", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 59 (1998), p. 82; Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. xii.

¹²⁹ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 177; Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 11-12.

Many men returned from the war mentally impaired; others who were suffering from shell shock later on married and reproduced their kind and some increase in mental illness has resulted.¹³⁰

Perhaps the most notable aspect of this argument was that Taylor appeared to believe that shell shock could be inherited through a Lamarckian process.¹³¹ On the other hand, it is possible that he subscribed to the view that those who succumbed to shell shock must necessarily have a tainted heredity. He did not, however, see only hereditary reasons for the increase in mental illness; he also blamed the "vicious social system in which the law of the survival of the fittest holds sway more than ever before".¹³² Taylor's argument illustrates the complexity of many opinions about mental illness that emerged during this period. People were not necessarily exclusively environmentalist or hereditarian. Many believed that both environment and heredity could influence mental states, and that both could have a potentially debilitating effect on the race. Taylor's statement also illustrates the confusion that often occurred in discussing the inheritance of diseases and characteristics.

The leader of the opposition, Edmund Maher, provided one of the few dissenting viewpoints. Maher did not approve of the change in

¹³⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 947.

¹³¹ Ambery, "The Hopewood experiment", p. 97; Carol Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women: the impact of scientific theories on attitudes towards women, 1870-1920", in Elizabeth Windschuttle, ed., *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on Australia, 1788-1978* (Auckland: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 137-38; Horwitz, "Always with us", p. 321.

¹³² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 947.

terminology, and was particularly concerned with the classification of people with nervous disorders. His argument also advanced the contemporary view of modern life as a producer of mental strain:

... under the stress and strain of modern life, a great number of persons in the community suffer from some form of nervous disorder. These would be horrified to think they were being classified under the heading of mentally sick, with people who are idiots.¹³³

He argued that the present system was better, as there was a clear distinction between the insane and those with nervous disorders. This appears to be another distinction again than that between the mentally ill and the mentally defective. Although Maher did not state it explicitly, this distinction was also seemingly based on the idea of "curability". The insane were beyond remedy, but those with nervous disorders were merely unfortunate victims of circumstance. He did not want it to appear, however, that he did not support the bill:

... we shall support any Bill designed to help or improve the conditions of the unfortunate section of the community who have become mentally afflicted through shock, or because of any unfavourable environment or heredity.¹³⁴

Thomas Nimmo, the United Australia Party member for Oxley, was one of the only parliamentarians to completely reject the bill, describing it as "nothing but a playing with words", and characterising the promises of the government as propaganda.¹³⁵ Nimmo argued that the number of

¹³³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 941.

¹³⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 942.

¹³⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 943.

persons in mental institutions who were able to be cured was "not great", and that most of those discharged were people who should never have been admitted to an institution in the first place.¹³⁶ He mocked the provision of the bill that aimed to provide a certificate to people who were mistakenly admitted to a mental institution, or who were admitted for a temporary condition and discharged as completely recovered. Nimmo did not believe that a certificate would counteract the stigma of being in an institution. Nimmo also expressed concern about the potential effects of the stress of modern life on the mental health of Queenslanders.¹³⁷ Amidst the discussion and praise for the humanitarian aims of the bill, it is interesting to note that a "proposal to have facilities in public institutions where people who can afford to have it may engage a private nurse or attendant" found favour with all parties, for the reason that it would reduce the "very great" cost associated with mental hospitals.¹³⁸ This suggests that financial considerations were never very far from discussions about the treatment of mental patients. Such considerations were expressed even more clearly in relation to the mentally defective.

In introducing the Mental Hygiene Bill, Hanlon drew an explicit distinction between the mentally sick, those who had an illness that "might possibly yield to treatment and be cured",¹³⁹ and mental defectives. He described this latter group as being the "naturally mentally

¹³⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 944.

¹³⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 944.

¹³⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 942.

¹³⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 940.

handicapped ... whose mental deficiency cannot be cured by medical treatment."¹⁴⁰ Since medical treatment was useless, the state had to accept liability for such people, and provide care and training for them. In contrast were people who were born with "normal" mentality, but who suffered injury or illness; these people were mentally "sick", not mentally "deficient", and could potentially be cured by medical treatment. Thus a clear line was drawn between curable and incurable mental problems. Thomas Nimmo summarised this position as follows: "People should not be sent to a hospital for mental deficientes until it is proved that they are incurable."¹⁴¹ Those with a mental illness had to be treated; those with a mental deficiency could only ever be cared for, and some people argued that the state should not even have to go this far.

Despite Hanlon's specific statements that the Mental Hygiene Bill was not intended to deal with mental deficientes, who were to be cared for under separate legislation, the discussion quickly turned to this group. Moore was the first to raise the issue. He did not use the phrase *mental deficientes*, however, instead describing them rather more circumspectly as "that class of persons we often read about – concerning whom a judge sometimes remarks that they are mentally sick, but he has no place to send them to."¹⁴² Hanlon once again stated that these people were to be dealt with under separate legislation, thus indicating that he understood

¹⁴⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 947.

¹⁴¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 944.

¹⁴² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

Moore's somewhat oblique reference. Moore was "glad to hear" that something was to be done about them in a separate bill, as it seemed "a pity that a person who is not a criminal should have to go to gaol because there is no suitable place to which he can be sent."¹⁴³ He commended the Minister's idea to trace the family history of mental patients, but hoped that it would go further. Moore then referred to "a very interesting book" by Drs. Nye and Bostock,¹⁴⁴ where the "question of the continued increase in numbers of the mentally deficient, and the need for some action" were discussed.¹⁴⁵ Moore was concerned with what would happen if no action were taken, asking:

... what will happen to a nation, particularly a young nation like this, if it is necessary to provide a continually increasing number of institutions for the mentally sick? This is something that is creating interest and demanding action not only in Queensland, but all over the world.¹⁴⁶

Hanlon rejected Moore's argument, noting that the "continually increasing number of institutions" was not due to any actual increase in the numbers of the mentally sick, but rather due to improvements in care and the greater willingness of people to seek help.¹⁴⁷ He also pointed out the difficulty of gathering information to estimate the size of the problem. Moore, however, went on to argue that there should be more institutions for children, who should be "taught to occupy themselves

¹⁴³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

¹⁴⁴ This was the 1934 work *Whither away?*

¹⁴⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

¹⁴⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

¹⁴⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

instead of merely leading an aimless existence", and Hanlon agreed that often, when people came to institutions, it was not until after the death of their parents, when they were "too old for us to do anything with them."¹⁴⁸ Moore's most explicit eugenic statement received no comment at all; he argued that the real value of the government's bill would only be realised if the investigations made were followed to their

... logical conclusion – that is, if after discovering the cause of the illness he [Hanlon] endeavours as far as possible to remedy it and so prevents its extension. It might mean segregation and it might mean sterilisation.¹⁴⁹

Either way, Moore appeared to believe that something would have to be done, and quickly. It is noticeable that like Ellerton, despite an initial protestation of humanitarian motives, Moore eventually advocated sterilisation in order to benefit the community and future racial fitness. This statement received no reply from other members of parliament.

These bills were generally considered important by the press.¹⁵⁰ The report in the *Courier Mail* on the Mental Hygiene Bill described the legislation as an act to reorganise the sub-department of insanity into a sub-department of mental hygiene, and focused on the change in terminology.¹⁵¹ The newspaper also pointed out that it was not intended

¹⁴⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

¹⁴⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (14 October 1938), p. 945.

¹⁵⁰ "Parliament still busy: more important bills", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 October 1938, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ "New mental care plan: parliament on cause of cases", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 15 October 1938, p. 9.

to deal with "mentally deficient people".¹⁵² It repeated Hanlon's assertion that health authorities had been "handicapped" in treating those with mental illness because of the associated stigma, and that people did not seek early treatment because they thought insanity was "something to be ashamed of."¹⁵³ Much of the report was simply a review of the parliamentary discussion.¹⁵⁴ The *Worker* carried a short paragraph, little more than a report of Hanlon's speech, focusing on reorganisation, more efficient care and treatment, and removing the shame of mental illness.¹⁵⁵ There was no editorial comment.

An opinion column on the bill in the *Courier Mail* was entitled "Old laws decked in new styles", and stated that the bill seemed primarily concerned with changing terminology, and that in discussion of the bill, the members "aired their views on all forms and grades of insanity":¹⁵⁶

It was a depressing topic, and when Mr. Maher [spoke about lunatics in the Middle Ages], everyone felt as merry as a tombstone. They cheered up momentarily when Mr. Taylor rather ambiguously remarked that there were still plenty of witchdoctors and spell-binders about. Mr. Maher was rather obsessed with the fear that mild and temporary cases of mental illness might be grouped as "mentally sick" with imbeciles and maniacs, but the Minister indicated that this was a delusion.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² "New mental care plan", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 15 October 1938, p. 9.

¹⁵³ "New mental care plan", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 15 October 1938, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ "New mental care plan", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 15 October 1938, p. 9.

¹⁵⁵ "State Parliament: care for mentally affected", *Worker* (Brisbane), 25 October 1938, p. 17.

¹⁵⁶ "Old laws decked in new styles", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 15 October 1938, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ "Old laws decked in new styles", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 15 October 1938, p. 4.

The levity indicated by this column was not necessarily indicative of the general tone of reports on the bill. This was obviously a satirical opinion piece. Generally, the press treated the subject seriously, and supported the government. Five days later, the *Courier Mail* reported on the second reading speech of the legislation, describing it as an attempt to change the public attitude towards mental hygiene in order to stop people from concealing mental infirmities, and providing more efficient treatment for the mentally ill.¹⁵⁸ The cost of maintaining institutions was mentioned as a "heavy responsibility on the State".¹⁵⁹ The rest of the article reprinted various views of parliamentarians on the bill. The final reading speech did not attract as detailed coverage.¹⁶⁰

Despite its general anti-government stance, the *Truth* approved of the mental health legislation. In reporting on the session of parliament, the *Truth* objected to acts being rushed through parliament without due scrutiny, but described the two mental health acts as "the only really worthwhile and commendable Acts passed".¹⁶¹ It added that a "review of the State's laws governing asylums and the treatment of the insane was long overdue".¹⁶² The paper condemned the trend in this legislation

¹⁵⁸ "Early treatment of nervous diseases: government seeks changed attitude on mental hygiene", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 20 October 1938, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ "Early treatment of nervous diseases", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 20 October 1938, p. 5. The cost was stated to be £235 000 a year for employing 691 people to look after approximately 3500 patients, many of whom, according to the *Courier Mail*, could be cared for elsewhere.

¹⁶⁰ "Teeth blamed for mental troubles: cases mentioned in House", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 5 November 1938, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 20; the most objectionable bill, according to the *Truth*, was the Milk Supply Bill, introduced by Bulcock.

¹⁶² *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 20.

towards government regulation, by which the *Truth* meant socialism, "even in such commendable measures as the Mental Hygiene and Backwards [sic] Persons Acts".¹⁶³ The *Truth* had a long history of campaigning for changes in the treatment of the mentally ill and intellectually impaired, possibly based on the potential of this topic to produce sensationalist stories.¹⁶⁴

During the debate over the Mental Hygiene Bill in Queensland parliament and the media, there was discussion of the difference between curables and incurables, and the question of sterilisation of incurables was raised. The greatest debate over these issues, however, was reserved for the first reading of the Backward Persons Bill. This can be attributed to the fact that this bill was intended to deal with mental "defectives", the so-called incurables, rather than the mentally sick, whose illness had an environmental cause and could therefore potentially be cured. Although such a clear distinction was not made in the bill itself, it quickly became apparent during the debate that many members of parliament viewed the situation in these terms. It was also evident, however, that these terms could easily become confused. The only constant seemed to be a

¹⁶³ *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 20.

¹⁶⁴ Various works on contemporary media portrayals of mental illness cite the way in which it is associated with violence and sexual incidents: Mike Hazelton, "Reporting mental health: a discourse analysis of mental health-related news in two Australian newspapers", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 6, 2 (1997), pp. 73-5; Greg Philo, Greg McLaughlin and Lesley Henderson, "Media content", in Greg Philo, ed., *Media and mental distress: Glasgow Media Group* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 45-81; Otto F. Wahl, *Media madness: public images of mental illness* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995), pp. 56-86; Charles Winick, "The image of mental illness in the mass media", in Walter R. Gove, ed., *Deviance and mental illness* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), pp. 225-46.

distinction between those illnesses caused by the environment, which were curable, and those caused by heredity, which were not.

Hanlon introduced the Backward Persons Bill into parliament on the 14 October 1938 as complementary legislation to the Mental Hygiene Bill. This bill was intended "to make provision for the education and care, treatment, and control of backward persons."¹⁶⁵ The idea of a bill dealing specifically with backward persons was based on the idea that such a class of people required permanent "care and control", separate from "mentally sick", or insane, people. A backward person was defined under the act as:

Any person, other than a mentally sick person as defined in "*The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938*", the development of whose mind has been arrested or is incomplete, whether such arrested or incomplete state was innate or induced after birth by disease, injury, or other cause, and who on account of such arrested or incomplete development is incapable of adapting himself to the normal environment of his fellows in such a way as to maintain existence independently of care, treatment, or control.¹⁶⁶

Thus, the bill did not focus on hereditary causes of mental deficiency, as it included those whose development had been caused by disease or injury. Whenever the affliction had occurred, it was permanent, in contrast to a potentially curable disease. The bill followed similar legislation both in Australia and in England which distinguished mental

¹⁶⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1726.

¹⁶⁶ *Backward Persons Act*, 1938, 2 Geo. 6 no. 30.

defectives from the mentally ill, and appeared to hold out little hope of "defectives" ever becoming normal.¹⁶⁷ This legislation was clearly intended to be progressive and humanitarian, and to bring treatment of mental "defectives" in Queensland up to date with their treatment in other parts of the world. The debate surrounding the Backward Persons Bill, despite the progressive intentions behind the legislation, clearly revealed the difference in attitudes towards those who had a mental illness and those who had a deficient mentality.

In his notes on this bill, Hanlon again mentioned the overseas visits made by Stafford in preparation for its drafting, stating that Stafford had "made particular investigation into this aspect of mental hygiene" whilst overseas, and "visited many of the leading centres and newest institutions dealing with this particular phase of medicine."¹⁶⁸ He also claimed that the legislation was not only more advanced than any other Australian state, but was also ahead of many overseas countries. According to Hanlon, the bill provided the "machinery to treat the backward person according to the most modern and advanced methods employed both in this country and abroad".¹⁶⁹ Hanlon added that the

¹⁶⁷ This legislation included the British *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1913, and the Tasmanian *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1920. For the British Act see, among others, Edward J. Larson, "The rhetoric of eugenics: expert authority and the Mental Deficiency Bill", *British Journal for the History of Science*, 24, 80 (1991), pp. 45-60. For the Tasmanian Act see Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry, "Vessels of progressivism?: Tasmanian state girls and eugenics, 1900-1940", *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), pp. 322-33.

¹⁶⁸ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's first reading speech, pp. 1-2, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's first reading speech, p. 10, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

government expected that its implementation would allow many "backward" persons to become "useful" citizens.¹⁷⁰

In his notes for his speech introducing the second reading of the bill, he emphasised this point again, stating that the Backward Persons Bill, as distinct from the Mental Hygiene Bill, dealt with "an entirely new aspect of mental hygiene", without precedent in the state.¹⁷¹ This was an exaggeration, as the definition of "backward" was not essentially different to mental deficiency as it was defined in English legislation.¹⁷² It is interesting to note, however, that he does not appear to have delivered either of these speeches to parliament. The record of his speeches shows that he instead focused almost entirely on the practical applications of the bill in identifying and caring for backward persons.¹⁷³ The provisions of the Backward Persons Bill, like those of the Mental Hygiene Bill, were depicted as being representative of modern thinking about the preferred treatment of these people. It contained provisions for segregation, but also for education and training.

The bill established a survey board to deal with "backward" people.¹⁷⁴ The survey board was to comprise the Director-General of Health and Medical Services as chairman; the Director of Education, and the

¹⁷⁰ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's first reading speech, p. 10, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷¹ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 1, A/27291, QSA.

¹⁷² Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 149.

¹⁷³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1726.

¹⁷⁴ *Backward Persons Act*, 1938, 2 Geo. 6 no. 30, s. 4.

Director of Mental Hygiene. They were to be commissioned to make a survey of the backward persons of the state, in order to report recommendations as to their classification, education, vocational treatment and control. A psychiatric clinic established under the act was to be responsible for investigating "all matters relating to backward persons", and the instruction of special education teachers.¹⁷⁵ Hanlon's notes indicated that the clinic was also intended to "disseminate knowledge to the public", in order to aid early diagnosis and thus curative treatment.¹⁷⁶ Although he did not mention this specifically in his introductory speech, he did emphasise that early and preventive treatment was a feature of the Backward Persons Bill as well as the Mental Hygiene Bill.¹⁷⁷

The bill also provided for the establishment of a training farm at Dalby, to supply vocational training for "backward" youths, an idea based on overseas models.¹⁷⁸ The mental hygiene movement advocated vocational training as the most beneficial way to care for and treat mental defectives, and the idea that physical activity could have a beneficial

¹⁷⁵ *Backward Persons Act*, 1938, 2 Geo. 6 no. 30, s. 8.

¹⁷⁶ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 5, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1727.

¹⁷⁸ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 6, A/27291, Queensland State Archives. Hanlon did not specify which models the farm was to be based on. The idea that the intellectually impaired would benefit from training at rural colonies, isolated from mainstream society, became apparent in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century (Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, p. 506).

effect on mental status was also influenced by the eugenics movement.¹⁷⁹ In introducing the bill into parliament, Hanlon focused heavily on the proposal to establish such a training farm.¹⁸⁰ The bill contained special provisions relating to children.¹⁸¹ In Hanlon's notes on this subject, he argued that because these children were unable to compete with normal persons for employment, and thus usually became permanently unemployed, or, in other words (and revealing that the financial motive was always present as much as concerns for the wellbeing of "defectives") constituted an economic loss to the state.¹⁸²

Hanlon's final point on the objectives of the bill was that a number of backward persons were found, "in the unequal struggle for existence, ... to lapse into a life of delinquency or even criminality."¹⁸³ This was "a very special problem" which would be the subject of investigation by the Psychiatric Clinic.¹⁸⁴ Hanlon did address the potential infringement of the rights of backward people in his speech. He concluded, however, that this was not a real problem, as when adequate care was provided privately, the government did not propose to interfere.¹⁸⁵ He then

¹⁷⁹ Many in the eugenics movement idealised country and rural pursuits as the healthiest (and hence most "eugenic") lifestyle. See Kühl, *The Nazi connection*, p. 29; and Rodwell, "Professor Harvey Sutton", p. 170.

¹⁸⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173, (15 November 1938), pp. 1726-27; (16 November 1938), p. 1797.

¹⁸¹ *Backward Persons Act*, 1938, 2 Geo. 6 no. 30, s. 9.

¹⁸² Backward Persons Bill 1938, p. 3, A/27293, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸³ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 6, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁴ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 6, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁵ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 3, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

discussed the role of the survey board and the psychiatric clinic, to be set up to establish the extent of the problem of backwardness. The board was commissioned to make a survey of backward persons in the state, and report concerning the classification, measures and institutions or schools required to deal with the problem.¹⁸⁶ The psychiatric clinic was to be "the centre of research in this particular phase of mental hygiene".¹⁸⁷

Hanlon, in introducing this bill, described it as intending to deal "with those persons who are either born without the normal or usual standard of intelligence or whose mental development becomes arrested or retarded"; those persons, in other words, who were generally categorised as "mental deficients".¹⁸⁸ Hanlon emphasised yet again that these persons were distinct from the mentally ill. Unlike insanity, backwardness was usually discernible in early childhood, but there had previously been no planned method for the treatment or education of these people, nor any endeavour "to alleviate [their] sufferings".¹⁸⁹ In Queensland, the only provision made had been to hold special classes, called "opportunity classes", for "backward" children. Although the bill contained comprehensive measures for the education and treatment of backward persons, especially children, the government did not propose

¹⁸⁶ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 4, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁷ Backward Persons Bill: Minister's second reading speech, p. 5, A/27291, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1726.

¹⁸⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1726.

to implement all the provisions of the bill immediately. They would only establish the system and appoint a board to collect information about the number of children available for treatment, and the degrees of backwardness among these children, with Hanlon stating that the government was "aiming to reach young people particularly".¹⁹⁰

During the initial debate Maher, who had been very sympathetic to the plight of the temporarily mentally ill, questioned "whether after all the expense and effort it is possible to do very much to rectify some of these deficiencies of nature", as most, if not all, these children "have inherited their shortcomings."¹⁹¹ Hanlon responded that many cases were due to glandular deficiency, but Maher did not accept this, arguing that by far the greatest percentage inherited their backwardness, and that it could usually be traced "to a condition prior to birth, an inherited condition, perhaps to a weakness of strain."¹⁹² Maher argued that it was impossible to do anything for the majority of cases, and that therefore the state should not become involved, but should leave the children with their parents. Thomas Nimmo once again supported Maher's point of view, and also argued for marriage restrictions for backward persons as defined in the act.

¹⁹⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1726.

¹⁹¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1727.

¹⁹² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (15 November 1938), p. 1727.

During the second reading of the bill, the humanitarian language that had characterised the earlier discussion of the Mental Hygiene Bill was not in evidence. Maher again stated his view that backward children should not be removed from their parents. Although he began by arguing that such a step would probably do more harm than good to the children themselves, he quickly moved to the consideration of the expense to the rest of the community. He argued that if backward children were sent to an institution, "much expense may be charged to the State quite unnecessarily."¹⁹³ He also seriously doubted whether experts would "be able to do anything that is worth while for the backward person."¹⁹⁴

The tone set by Maher was continued by the member for Warrego, Randolph Bedford, a strong advocate of racial fitness and eugenic ideas. Bedford expressed his approval of the bill, calling it "a commendable attempt to do something for the backward children", continuing, "the euphemism [backward] says something for the kindness of heart of the Minister."¹⁹⁵ His approval was not unconditional; he saw the bill as "only a palliative". Bedford stated that he was

... not prepared to state that lazy public opinion is yet in favour of the only way there is of not making this evil of backward children permanent. ... I believe it is only superstition, laziness, and want of thinking that prevents us from taking the only step by which it will be possible, in time, to wipe out insanity and all the diseases that run with it. ... I say quite plainly that I am in favour of sterilisation ...¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1798.

¹⁹⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1798.

¹⁹⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1799.

¹⁹⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1799.

Maher also believed that there was a "solid" body of opinion in favour of such a step.¹⁹⁷ Bedford continued with a long and somewhat confused speech advocating the sterilisation of backward persons, arguing that in civilised societies, it was the most humane way to treat such people.¹⁹⁸ He blamed the increase in mental defectiveness in contemporary society on the stresses of war and the increased incidence of syphilis.¹⁹⁹ Returning to his point, he concluded that:

Australia now has a chance of dealing with the incurable deficient – nobody can give them new brains – who will inevitably pass on their disease. They should be prevented by law from passing on their taint to the rest of the flock, which up to now is comparatively clean.²⁰⁰

Moore also supported Bedford's opinions. Bedford's views on such subjects were a matter of record, but it was rare for him to receive vocal support, and interesting that it came from Moore and Maher, who were in political opposition to Bedford. Moore claimed that general opinion in the community was:

... that far more drastic action is needed than the mere segregation of the mentally backward and opportunity classes for the defectives. ... As the hon. member for Warrego virtually said, these

¹⁹⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1799.

¹⁹⁸ In his argument he referred, somewhat surprisingly, to the Salem witch trials (arguing that the children who prompted the trials were of the type "kindly called backward ... in this Bill", and should have been sterilised), and, more understandably, to the classic example cited by believers in hereditary degeneracy, the Juke family, although the Juke family studies also acknowledged the importance of environmental influences (Rafter, *White trash*, p. 9).

¹⁹⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1800. During this section of his speech, Bedford departed from his subject to discuss the hypocrisies of the Victorian age and the healing power of prayer, to such an extent that he was called to order by the Speaker.

²⁰⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1800.

people have all the desires of adults without the mental capacity to restrain themselves from satisfying those desires. That fact must lead to an increasing number of mentally backward and mentally deficient persons.²⁰¹

Moore was clearly referring to the presumed promiscuity of mental defectives. One of the biggest fears of the eugenics movement, a fear bordering on paranoia, and which, as Moore's speech illustrates, often contained an undercurrent of titillation, was that the unfit were reproducing their kind at a much greater rate than the fit, due to their lack of control over their sexual appetites.²⁰² This was one of the main arguments advanced for state-imposed control of their reproduction.²⁰³ Although neither Moore nor Bedford made a distinction in their speeches between the insane and mental "defectives", their language makes it clear that they did see a distinction between curable and incurable mental problems.

Moore praised the government for the establishment of the survey board. He believed that the investigation of the incidence of backwardness in the state was absolutely crucial, particularly in the country, where the families tended to be larger, "and the number of backward children are

²⁰¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1800.

²⁰² "The feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4; Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 218; Garton, "Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales", p. 28; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", pp. 331-32; Schuster, *Eugenics*, p. 172; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 63.

²⁰³ Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings*, p. 3. Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 10; the Racial Hygiene Association of New South Wales, for example, argued that segregation and sterilisation were the only way to stop the unfit from reproducing "to the extent which they are now doing".

extraordinarily great.”²⁰⁴ This sentiment was hardly likely to endear Moore or his Country Party to rural voters. He argued that backward people were a permanent danger to the community, even after being institutionalised and given opportunity classes, and that allowing them the chance to earn their own living would only lead to an increase in their numbers. This aspect of Moore’s argument is interesting in that it does not focus on economics, but rather on the propagation of “defectives”, and was thus firmly concerned with controlling reproduction. He concluded that the only solution “in the interests of the community and in the interests of these mentally affected people” was sterilisation.²⁰⁵ There was very little reaction to Moore’s statements.²⁰⁶ Hanlon concluded the debate by stating that the government did not intend to spend public money on the work until more information on the “problem” was gathered.²⁰⁷

There was little editorial discussion of the Backward Persons Bill in the *Courier Mail*, which simply reported on the parliamentary debate.²⁰⁸ In contrast, the *Worker* gave the Backward Persons Bill slightly more space than it had given to the Mental Hygiene Bill, and began its report with an editorial comment stating that the bill provided “evidence of the

²⁰⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1800.

²⁰⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1801.

²⁰⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1801. Patrick Copley, the member for Kurilpa, replied to Moore’s speech, agreeing with some of his sentiments. He did not address the question of sterilisation; the only issue raised by Moore with which he disagreed was the issue of payment of mental defectives.

²⁰⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (16 November 1938), p. 1801.

²⁰⁸ “Care of mental defectives: assistance plans in new bill”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 16 November 1938, p. 4.

prominence given to humanitarian considerations in the Labor Government's legislative programme".²⁰⁹ The rest of the paragraph merely comprised a report of Hanlon's speech, mentioning his statement that mental deficientes were "a class distinct altogether from insane persons".²¹⁰ The *Worker* was generally supportive of Labor government policies, in contrast to the mainstream conservative press.²¹¹ It is interesting that the *Worker* devoted more space to the Backward Persons Bill than it did to the Mental Hygiene Bill.

In contrast to the *Worker* was the *Truth's* report of the legislation, which emphasised what it obviously considered the most important aspect of the legislation. Its article on the bill was entitled "Backward Persons Act: 'halfway house' still a necessity: sex offenders the real problem", and argued that the "most urgently required social reform in Queensland" was "the provision of a Halfway House for the treatment of criminally-inclined mental defectives, particularly sex offenders", and that this had "been brought a step nearer by the passing of the Backward Persons Act."²¹² The tone of this article is a further indication that the *Truth's* interest in the subject was sensationalist. The *Truth* did acknowledge that the act was not primarily concerned with the issue of a halfway house for sex offenders. It noted that the survey board was empowered to

²⁰⁹ "Humanitarian legislation", *Worker* (Brisbane), 22 November 1938, p. 24.

²¹⁰ "Humanitarian legislation", *Worker* (Brisbane), 22 November 1938, p. 24.

²¹¹ Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 106-7.

²¹² "Backward Persons Act: 'halfway house' still a necessity: sex offenders the real problem", *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 28.

"formulate a system for dealing with criminal backward persons", although Hanlon told the *Truth* that no provision for an institution for "criminal backward persons" would be made until the recommendations of the board had been received.²¹³ The *Truth* had been campaigning for years for a halfway house, claiming that the need had been emphasised by judges and magistrates.²¹⁴ It further argued that many mental defectives "whose mental condition does not warrant their incarceration in an asylum are at present sent to gaol simply because there is nowhere else to send them."²¹⁵ They did not receive proper treatment, spent their lives in and out of gaol, and were a "constant menace to the public" when at liberty.²¹⁶ Once again, mental defectives were described as a menace to the public, although in this instance the menace appeared to be linked to behaviour, and specifically sexual behaviour, unconnected with reproduction.²¹⁷

Implementation of the provisions of the bill was slow, and was hampered by the war. In 1940, Stafford was appointed Director of Mental Hygiene.²¹⁸ In a 1941 report, he proposed seven steps needed in order to

²¹³ "Backward Persons Act: 'halfway house' still a necessity: sex offenders the real problem", *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 28.

²¹⁴ "Backward Persons Act", *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 28.

²¹⁵ "Backward Persons Act", *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 28.

²¹⁶ "Backward Persons Act: 'halfway house' still a necessity: sex offenders the real problem", *Truth* (Brisbane), 20 November 1938, p. 28.

²¹⁷ The suggestion that the sexual behaviour of mental "defectives" was uncontrolled was one of the longstanding fears relating to this group of people. In 1912, *The Times* stated that their behaviour constituted a "menace to the welfare of the community" ("The feeble-minded: II. – proposed legislation", *The Times* (London), 16 May 1912, p. 6).

²¹⁸ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 132.

relieve overcrowding and implement the 1938 act, among which were the provision of special accommodation for voluntary and private patients; the establishment of a mental hospital for the criminal mentally sick, and also an institution or institutions for backward persons, segregated by sex and degrees of backwardness; and finally, the provision of facilities for the care and treatment of the mentally sick in public hospitals.²¹⁹ These steps indicated a desire to provide preventive and early treatment for the mentally ill, and also the desire to segregate "backward" people from society.

The implementation of the *Backward Persons Act* was largely focused on the establishment of the training farm at Dalby.²²⁰ It was intended to convert the Dalby Sanatorium for this purpose, and Stafford argued that this could commence immediately.²²¹ He continued that any further progress would be "at a standstill" until it was proclaimed, although he also stated that no program for the accommodation of these people was possible until the survey board appointed under the *Backward Persons Act* of 1938 became functional.²²² The Dalby Training Farm was established in May 1941, but was disrupted by the war as the building

²¹⁹ Report of Acting Director of Mental Hygiene, p. 1, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁰ Basil Stafford, Director-General of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, 8 February 1941, in-letter not provided, p. 6, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

²²¹ Basil Stafford, Director-General of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, 8 February 1941, in-letter not provided, p. 6, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

²²² Report of Acting Director of Mental Hygiene, p. 5, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

was required for the war effort.²²³ The government stated that it expected to resume the project as soon as possible, but in the event, the farm was never re-opened.²²⁴ A Psychiatric Clinic was established in temporary offices for the duration of the war.²²⁵

Even by the late 1940s, many provisions of the acts had yet to be implemented. The future plans outlined at this time, and given departmental approval, were ambitious, although less so than those suggested earlier. They included accommodation for returned soldiers, institutions for both backward persons and the criminally mentally sick, an intermediate psychiatric hospital, and special provisions for those suffering from senile psychoses and epilepsy. Stafford stated that the "ultimate object of [the *Mental Hygiene Act* of 1938] was to bring the question of treatment of mental sickness to the same status as that of physical sickness."²²⁶ He maintained that this object could be attained by educating the public about the necessity of early treatment, providing facilities to accommodate this, and the compulsory notification of those people who did not voluntarily seek treatment. He stated that many forms of mental illness seen as incurable were in fact the result of a failure to seek out early treatment.

²²³ Report of the Director of Mental Hygiene, showing the progress in the mental hygiene service during recent years and plans for the future, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives. The land purchased at Dalby was appropriated by the defense forces (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (28 August 1940), p. 111). See also Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 80.

²²⁴ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 132.

²²⁵ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 80. The Psychiatric Clinic eventually developed into the Youth Welfare and Guidance Clinics.

²²⁶ Report of the Director of Mental Hygiene, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

The main concern related to mental hygiene during the 1940s was that of overcrowding in mental wards.²²⁷ Despite the urgent and continuing nature of this problem, few steps were taken to implement the *Mental Hygiene Act* during World War II.²²⁸ In 1941, Stafford emphasised the need to build a northern mental hospital in order to relieve the pressure on psychiatric wards in Brisbane and surrounding areas, but its construction was delayed because of the war.²²⁹ The proposal for a northern mental hospital had first been made in 1900, by James Hogg, the then Inspector of Asylums, and the issue was periodically raised throughout the 1920s and 1930s.²³⁰ The site of the proposed hospital was Charters Towers, and the constant deferral of construction was a source of concern to this community. In 1945 the *Northern Miner* published an article asking why the proposed northern mental hospital had not yet been built.²³¹ It was eventually built in 1954.²³²

²²⁷ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 47; Lewis points out that the problem of overcrowding was faced by psychiatric wards in all Australian states at this time.

²²⁸ Director-General of Health and Medical Services to Home Secretary (memo regarding overcrowding in the female wards), 22 September 1941, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁹ Basil Stafford, Director-General of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, 8 February 1941, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives, p. 5; Secretary for Health and Home Affairs to Director General of Mental Hygiene Services, 13 October 1943, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²³⁰ Ellerton, Inspector of Asylums, Goodna to Hanlon, Home Secretary, 23 May 1934, in-letter 4512 of 1934, Ellerton, to Cilento, Director-General of Health and Medical Services, 15 September 1935, in-letter not provided, A/31801, Queensland State Archives; Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 47; Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 128.

²³¹ *Northern Miner*, newspaper clipping, 24 May 1945, in-letter 1578 of 1943, A/31801, Queensland State Archives. It was also raised in parliament in 1950 (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (18 October 1950-51), p. 736).

²³² Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland*, p. 132.

Provision for the criminal mentally sick was also considered an urgent matter at this time, possibly motivated by concern about escapes. Stafford thought that the practice of treating this group of people in ordinary mental hospitals was injurious to the other patients, who were subjected to unnecessarily severe and rigid control.²³³ He also argued that it was unfair to the staff, as the criminal mentally sick should be treated by experts trained in the field of criminal psychiatry. He stated that the economic loss caused to the community by the anti-social acts of such people was enough to warrant their segregation from other classes of the insane, in order to facilitate special study and research. Once again, financial considerations were raised in relation to the treatment of a group of mentally disturbed adults. He suggested that Brisbane Prison would be able to accommodate more prisoners, and that the establishment of a mental hospital would provide a nucleus for the scientific investigation of crime in its relations to mental sickness, mental deficiency and delinquency, as well as supplying more efficient staff for the criminal mentally sick.²³⁴ Stafford also argued that the provision of a criminal mental hospital was extremely urgent, stating that he had emphasised this several times.²³⁵

²³³ Acting Director of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

²³⁴ Acting Director of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

²³⁵ Basil Stafford, Director-General of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, 8 February 1941, p. 5, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

In 1944, the Report of the Committee of Inquiry Regarding Sexual Offenders was released by the Queensland government.²³⁶ Although the major focus of this report was not on mental "defectives", the committee concluded that backwardness was a major problem in the State, sufficient to warrant special institutions, but not sterilisation. The committee stated that it "could not, on the evidence available to it, form a considered opinion as to the efficacy of sterilisation as a eugenic measure in relation to the general population of mental deficiency".²³⁷ Sterilisation was also considered ineffective as a cure for sexual offenders. Despite the committee's report, which identified backwardness as a major problem for the state, in 1950, a proposed home for "backward persons" received low priority from the government.²³⁸ Overall, the *Mental Hygiene Act* probably received a higher priority than the *Backward Persons Act*, but even so, many of its provisions had still not been implemented by the early 1950s.²³⁹

Psychiatrists as a group were, naturally, particularly concerned about the problems of overcrowding in mental wards in the 1940s.²⁴⁰ In 1949,

²³⁶ Elizabeth McRobert, *Challinor Centre: the end of the line: a history of the institution also known as Sandy Gallop* (Queensland: Queensland Government, 1997), p. 86.

²³⁷ Quoted in McRobert, *Challinor Centre*, p. 86.

²³⁸ Memo from the Department of Mental Hygiene regarding priority of projects concerning mental hygiene, 11 December 1950, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²³⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (16 March, 1950-1), p. 2080.

²⁴⁰ Beliefs about shell shock had transformed since World War I; it was now accepted as a curable, temporary condition: "New hope for war neurotics", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 February 1947, p. 2. See also Ted Bogacz, "War neurosis and cultural change in England, 1914-22: the work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock'", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24, 2 (1989), p. 250.

the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists printed a pamphlet on the current situation of mental hygiene services, in response to recent publicity about overcrowding in mental hospitals; the association blamed community ignorance for many of the problems faced by mental health workers.²⁴¹ It is not surprising that this organisation was one of the few groups which maintained a pressing interest in the problems of mental defectives. The pamphlet set out several minimum requirements for improved mental health services, one of which was adequate provision for mental defectives.²⁴² It stressed the need for collaboration between psychiatric staff, medical and surgical staff, and general practitioners, in identifying borderline cases. It also stated that care for mental defectives was overdue, and that they should be segregated from the mentally ill.²⁴³

It continued:

The public do not appreciate the extent and extreme poignancy of the mental defective problem. It is computed that in each million of population there should be accommodation for nearly 4000 persons, including 1000 feeble-minded children, who would need training in special schools. The poignancy of the situation lies in the fact that defectives through their backwardness frequently gravitate into delinquency, crime, prostitution, and other activities of overt behaviour. They tend to beget other defectives. The result is a very large sized community problem which calls for immediate action.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Pamphlet of the Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill, date stamped 12 May 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴² Pamphlet of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, p. 2, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴³ Pamphlet of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, p. 5, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴⁴ Pamphlet of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, p. 5, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

In a strongly Darwinian argument, it continued that the two wars provided setbacks for the treatment of mental "invalids", because in "a fight for existence the weak must suffer".²⁴⁵ It was not due to a lack of funds, but rather to circumstances which limited how usefully these funds could be deployed. The association felt that even the most progressive states had failed to provide adequate accommodation for mental defectives, in spite of various parliamentary acts,²⁴⁶ and some special schools, homes and hospitals. The pamphlet concluded:

It is to be hoped that although the problem of the defective is bound up with the security of materials and personnel there may be a somewhat higher priority than in the past. It is not a question of humanity but of cost. A community cannot afford to leave this problem untouched.²⁴⁷

As in almost all discussions about mentally "unfit" adults, and most noticeably about the mentally defective, in spite of initially discussing their humanitarian motives in attempting to care for these people, the pamphlet eventually returned to the cost of supporting them.

Another association, one which approached the issues of mental illness and mental "defectiveness" from a different perspective to the Association of Psychiatrists, was active in Queensland during the 1940s. The Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill

²⁴⁵ Pamphlet of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, p. 5, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴⁶ They listed these acts as Tasmania 1920, South Australia 1935-45, Queensland 1938, New South Wales 1939, and Victoria 1939.

²⁴⁷ Pamphlet of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, p. 5, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

(ARAFMI) campaigned throughout the later part of this decade for better treatment for the mentally ill. A pamphlet printed by the association stated that their main aims were to increase patients' rights and freedoms, and to remove the stigma of mental illness. That ideas about training and efficiency were still present is strongly suggested by the fact that one of the stated aims of the association was to help "defective children" by providing them with training in order that they could become "useful citizens".²⁴⁸ This desire was no doubt motivated by a genuine desire to help these children, but the continued emphasis on their becoming "useful", necessarily opposed to "useless", is suggestive of less altruistic motives.²⁴⁹

From 1947 onwards ARAFMI were particularly concerned about physical abuse of patients in mental hospitals.²⁵⁰ In 1949 the members of the association provided the government with a list of requests on behalf of mental patients.²⁵¹ The list included appeals for patients to be given more freedom and exercise, better lighting in their rooms, and access to

²⁴⁸ Pamphlet of the Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴⁹ See, for an earlier example, Havelock Ellis, *The problem of race regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911), p. 66, who argued that the feeble-minded should be trained so that their labour could be "utilised" by the state.

²⁵⁰ See A. Jones, Minister for Health and Home Affairs to A. M. Craigie, President, Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (Queensland), 27 October 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949; Memorandum from Acting Director of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, 12 October 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949; Jones to Craigie, 6 October 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949; Craigie to Jones, 1 October 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁵¹ Victoria A. Turner, Secretary, Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (Queensland) to Jones, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 4 August 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

individual lockers, among other similar requests. The Australasian Association of Psychiatrists objected to the publicity given to such organisations, arguing that the press should "be informed of the lamentable fact that public outcry against mental hospitals has terrible results, if by painting lurid pictures of abuse, it further depletes an already attenuated staff."²⁵²

Overcrowding in psychiatric wards remained a concern throughout the 1940s, and into the 1950s.²⁵³ At this time, however, the situation changed. The introduction of psychotropic drugs as a treatment method in the 1950s relieved pressure on psychiatric wards, as it allowed early discharge for patients who would previously have needed long term care.²⁵⁴ The decision to rehouse senile patients in annexes attached to general hospitals also helped to reduce overcrowding.²⁵⁵ By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the emphasis in mental health care had shifted to community care and open hospitals.²⁵⁶ The problems associated with the provision of psychiatric care subsequently changed. Although new

²⁵² Pamphlet of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, p. 6, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁵³ Hanlon, Minister for Health and Home Affairs to H. A. Bruce, Minister for Public Works, 13 October 1943, in-letter 1578 of 1943, A/31801, Queensland State Archives. In 1930-31, there was a combined total of 3572 patients in these hospitals; in 1934-35 there were 3928; in 1938-39 there were 4187; by 1942-3, there were 4579; by 1945-46 there were 4642; in 1946-47 there were 4549; in 1947-48 there were 4617; by 1948-49 there were 4737; and by 1949-50 there were 4800 (Memo from the Department of Health and Home Affairs re: overcrowding at Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba Mental Hospitals, 30 March 1951, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives).

²⁵⁴ Lewis, *Managing madness*, pp. 56, 85.

²⁵⁵ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 85.

²⁵⁶ Lewis, *Managing madness*, p. 85.

problems arose, concerns focused less on ideas about racial fitness, although some of these attitudes proved remarkably persistent.

By 1950, many discussions about mental hygiene were focused on physical training as a way of achieving mental health. While this was not eugenic in itself, it still focused to some degree on racial fitness, at least in terms of physical fitness. Concerns about physical fitness were certainly influenced by earlier eugenic ideas, even if this connection was less explicitly articulated than previously.²⁵⁷ In May 1950, the ARAFMI began campaigning for the appointment of a physical training instructor to the Brisbane Mental Hospital. William Moore, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, told them that the possibility was being investigated.²⁵⁸ He added, however, that a previous attempt at providing the boys at the hospital with an "elementary academic education" failed as they were unable to assimilate even basic information.²⁵⁹ Occupational therapy was proving more successful. Moore's reply appeared to be merely aimed at pacifying the association, as he had

²⁵⁷ C. P. Blacker, Eugenics Society, London to V. H. Wallace, Eugenics Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 1961, SA/EUG Box 48, E4, Wellcome Institute Library, London; Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", pp. 250-52; Gunnar Broberg and Mattias Tyden, "Eugenics in Sweden: efficient care", in Broberg and Roll-Hansen, *Eugenics and the welfare state*, p. 130; Catrine Clay and Michael Leapman, *Master race: the Lebensborn experiment in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), p. 181; Hansen, "Something rotten in the state of Denmark", p. 61; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 319; Richard White, *Inventing Australia: images and identity 1688-1980* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 157.

²⁵⁸ W. Moore, Minister for Health and Home Affairs to Craigie, President, Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (Queensland), 22 May 1950, in-letter 6279 of 1950, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

²⁵⁹ W. Moore, Minister for Health and Home Affairs to Craigie, President, Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (Queensland), 22 May 1950, in-letter 6279 of 1950, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

received an earlier memo from Stafford which stated definitely that it would be impossible to appoint an instructor.²⁶⁰ It is clear that by 1950, debate about both mentally ill and intellectually impaired adults was changing. This change incorporated older ideas about racial fitness, and owed a debt to the earlier eugenics movement, but also showed the significant influence of new pressures and interests.

Between 1930 and 1950, attitudes in Queensland towards mentally "unfit" adults, and especially mental defectives, changed significantly. During the 1930s, there was a much greater sense of urgency in the debate about such people, emphasised by the tone of the debate and the repeated use of the word *menace* to describe them. The debate about how care and control should be achieved revealed that many prominent people in Queensland society held views that could be considered eugenic. They advocated the sterilisation or segregation of mentally disturbed adults to prevent their propagation and so protect the future of the race. Another suggested solution, the segregation of mentally disturbed adults to protect the community, was influenced by concerns with social control.

The rhetoric surrounding both these suggested solutions was usually initially focused on humanitarian aims, but also encompassed financial

²⁶⁰ Memorandum from Stafford, Director of Mental Hygiene, Goodna to Cilento, Director-General of Health and Medical Services, Brisbane, 11 May 1950, in-letter 6279 of 1950, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

considerations. The idea that economics was of equal importance in these debates as a concern for the wellbeing of the mentally ill and the mentally "defective", is suggested by the way in which the debate continually returned to the cost of care. During the Second World War, as in the First, other issues were prioritised over the treatment and control of mentally "unfit" adults. Despite the various motivations of people involved in the debate, and a decrease in interest after 1940, it is more than likely that the type of debate carried on during this period contributed to a view of mentally "unfit" adults as less than human.

Chapter Four

“A permanent charge on the state”?

Race, eugenic ideology and racial fitness

In 1934, W. J. Gall, the Under Secretary of the Home Department, sent a memorandum to Governor Leslie Wilson on the *Aboriginals Protection Acts* in Queensland.¹ Gall was concerned with the future of Aboriginal people in Queensland, asking several times whether they would ever be self-sufficient, or would instead become “a permanent charge on the State”.² He described Aboriginal people as being members of an “inferior race”. He was primarily concerned with “half-castes”, as he believed that this population was growing and should not be absorbed into the white community. Any attempts to allow “half-castes” to intermarry with whites would, according to Gall, result in “the breeding up of an inferior race”.³ Finally, he concluded on an ominous note with the incredible statement:

Inferior races will have to go and, in my opinion, Governments, sooner or later, will have seriously to consider the question of sterilization of the half-caste.⁴

¹ W. J. Gall to Governor Leslie Wilson, memorandum, Aboriginal Protection Acts Queensland, no date, in-letter not provided, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

² Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

³ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 6, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

⁴ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 6, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

Although Gall's advocacy of sterilisation was extreme, his beliefs about Aboriginal people and "inferior" races generally were far from unusual in Queensland between 1900 and 1950.⁵ During this period, attitudes towards these groups of people frequently focused on the threat that they were believed to pose to the "purity" or "fitness" of the white race. It is generally agreed that race relations in Queensland were particularly problematic, in comparison with other Australian states.⁶ The influence of racial theories on attitudes towards non-white races in Queensland has been relatively neglected, although some recent works address this topic.⁷ Racial thought in Europe and America at this time was complex,

⁵ Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland: a history of exclusion, exploitation and extermination* 3rd ed. (St Lucia: University of Queensland, 1993); Evans, "The owl and the eagle": the significance of race in colonial Queensland", in *Fighting words: writing about race* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), pp. 34-47; Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1996), pp. 145-46, 198-99. For Australia see Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Australians: black responses to white dominance, 1788-2001* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2002), pp. 91-9; S. Encel, "The nature of race prejudice in Australia", in F. S. Stevens, ed., *Racism: the Australian experience: a study of race prejudice in Australia*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 1974), pp. 30-40; Anna Haebich, *For their own good: Aborigines and government in the south west of Western Australia 1900-1940* 2nd ed. (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1992), pp. 106, 128; C. D. Rowley, *The destruction of Aboriginal society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 87, 225. For a recent criticism of much work on this subject see Mark Francis, "Social Darwinism' and the construction of institutionalised racism in Australia", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 50/51 (1996), pp. 90-105. Francis argues that a focus on Social Darwinist beliefs does not take account of conflicting ideologies that were also influential on policy (pp. 91-3).

⁶ David Cameron, An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, 1900 to 1930, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1999, p. 34; Ross Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), p. 233; Stuart Macintyre, *Winners and losers: the pursuit of social justice in Australian history* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 133-34; A. T. Yarwood and M. J. Knowling, *Race relations in Australia: a history* (Sydney: Methuen, 1982), pp. 191-92, 221-22.

⁷ Lisa Ford, *Picturing the enemy: race and gender in World War II cartoons*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2001; Ross Laurie, "Not a matter of taste but a healthy racial instinct": race relations in Australia in the 1920s: racial ideology and the popular press, Hons thesis, Griffith University, 1989.

and encompassed many different points of view.⁸ For the most part, racial purity was believed to be essential, an idea that was part of a long tradition of racist thought.⁹ In the twentieth century it increasingly resulted in arguments that the state should act to ensure such purity, particularly through controlling the reproduction of certain racial groups.

This chapter explores the intersections between older racial ideas that were part of the ingrained power structures of Queensland, and the influence of eugenic rhetoric on racial purity and fitness during the first half of the twentieth century. These intersections were particularly apparent in discourse relating to the Aboriginal population of the state, hence this chapter will place a strong emphasis on discussion about this group. The language used to discuss Aboriginal people, and particularly

⁸ Marvin Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory: a history of theories of culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1968), see especially pp. 80-107, where he discusses the rise of racial determinism in Western Europe and north America during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See also Michael Banton, *Racial theories*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 88-97; Elazar Barkan, *The retreat of scientific racism: changing concepts of race in Britain and the United States between the world wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and pathology: stereotypes of sexuality, race and madness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 135-36, 154-55; Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the rat was white: a historical view of psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and prejudice: the politics and diplomacy of racial discrimination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 44-51; Ashley Montagu, *Man's most dangerous myth: the fallacy of race*, 6th ed. (London: Altamira Press, 1997); Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 111, 128-29, 137.

⁹ There were two strands of thinking about the difference between races: monogenists believed that all races had the same origins, and that differences were due to acquired characteristics, while polygenists believed that different races were in fact different species (Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 83-90). Although both theories could lead to a belief that the white race was inherently superior, it was polygenists who tended to be racial determinists, and it was this theory which was dominant by the twentieth century (Harris, p. 86; Russell McGregor, *Imagined destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997), p. 44). Either theory could, however, lead to the promotion of racial or cultural separateness and "purity".

about that section of the population referred to by the biologically racist term “half-castes”, revealed that the white community felt that these people represented a “menace” to racial fitness.¹⁰ It may be that rhetoric of racial purity was so ingrained in Queensland that an explicit articulation of eugenic philosophy was unnecessary.

This chapter will first discuss debates surrounding non-indigenous non-European races in Queensland, particularly in the context of the legislation known collectively as the “White Australia” policy.¹¹ It will argue that, despite widespread racism in government debate and in the mainstream press, there was little evidence of direct eugenic influence on this discourse. This is almost certainly due to the success of the “White Australia” policy at controlling non-European populations. The chapter will then explore debate about the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland. It will first examine the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* of 1897, the act which provided the basic framework for the treatment of Aboriginal people in Queensland for most of the twentieth

¹⁰ Jackie Huggins, in “Pretty deadly tidda business”, in Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman, eds, *Feminism and the politics of difference* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993), pp. 70-1, argues that the term *half-caste* is biologically racist and should never be used. Although acknowledging this, the focus of this chapter necessitates differentiating between those Aboriginal people deemed “full-bloods” and those deemed “half-castes”. These people received different treatment based on this perceived difference, and one of the arguments of this chapter is about eugenic fears engendered by the existence of a population of “half-castes” in the state. For this reason, the use of these terms is necessary.

¹¹ D. M. Gibb, *The making of “white Australia”* (Melbourne: Victorian Historical Association, 1979); A. C. Palfreman, *The administration of the White Australia Policy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967); Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967); A. T. Yarwood, “The white Australia policy”, in Stevens, *Racism*, pp. 164-72.

century.¹² Although “White Australia” policies targeted Aboriginal people as well as immigrants,¹³ the primary responsibility for these people was with the states. Hence, in Queensland, an understanding of the 1897 act is essential for an examination of attitudes towards Aboriginal people. The chapter will then examine the various ideas expressed about these people in the context of ideas about racial fitness and heredity, and the influence of eugenic ideology. In the early twentieth century, the so-called “doomed race theory” was prevalent. This belief owed more to Social Darwinism than to eugenics, although the lines between these two theories were not clearly demarcated.¹⁴

The chapter will then turn to a discussion of debates about contact between Aboriginal people and people of other races, especially Europeans, and the so-called “menace” of the “half-caste”, arguing that it was in these debates that eugenic influence and ideas about racial fitness and purity were mostly clearly evident.¹⁵ There was considerable

¹² Evans, *Fighting words*, p. 17; Anna Haebich, *Broken circles: fragmenting indigenous families 1800-2000* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000), p. 171; William Thorpe, “Archibald Meston and Aboriginal legislation in colonial Queensland”, *Historical Studies*, 21, 82 (1984), p. 52.

¹³ Patricia Grimshaw, “Federation as a turning point in Australian history”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 118 (2001), p. 26; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, p. 251.

¹⁴ For Social Darwinism see Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 122-25; Michael Banton, *The idea of race* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 89-100; Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English thought: the interaction between biological and social theory* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980). As McGregor points out, the “doomed race” theory was so popular precisely because it reinforced a host of already existing racial prejudices (*Imagined destinies*, p. 58).

¹⁵ These debates also revealed an obsession with the classification and categorisation of Aboriginal people. See Huggins, “Pretty deadly tidda business”, p. 64, and Rita Huggins and Jackie Huggins, *Auntie Rita* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994), p. 11. For racial classification generally see Banton, *Racial theories*, pp. 18-23; Montagu, *Man’s most dangerous myth*, pp. 49-50, 285. For general discussion on the

overlap between these ideas, and the “doomed race” theory proved remarkably persistent in the face of contrary evidence. Nevertheless, fears about contact between the races became more prevalent as the century progressed and it became apparent that Aboriginal people were not dying out. By the 1930s, these fears had reached a peak, reflected in statements such as Gall’s, and also in a 1934 amendment to the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* that dramatically increased the already considerable government authority with regard to Aboriginal people. During the 1940s, however, a general trend towards environmentalism and away from hereditary and racial determinism was apparent in the beginning of a change in attitude in Queensland towards non-European races. Finally, the chapter will discuss debates about the education and training of Aboriginal people in Queensland, arguing that an examination of these debates reveals that Aboriginal people were often perceived to have limited mental capacity, and were often treated in a similar manner to mental “defectives”.

The focus of this chapter is almost exclusively on Aboriginal people, but some references to Torres Strait Islander people will be considered as well, as these two groups of people were often treated in a similar manner.¹⁶ In many debates, these people received slightly more respect

classification and categorisation of marginalised groups see Cohen, *Visions of social control*, p. 13; Jan Goldstein, *Console and classify: the French psychiatric profession in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 321, 324, 383.

¹⁶ Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 172.

than did mainland Aboriginal people, and it is argued that although Torres Strait Islanders came under the jurisdiction of the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts* from 1904 until 1939, they were often exempt from the ideas discussed in this chapter that were applied to Aboriginal people.¹⁷

The usual explanation that was advanced to explain the widespread belief that Torres Strait Islanders were a less “degraded” race than mainland Aboriginal people was their relative lack of contact with the white race.¹⁸ Some even argued that they were a separate “race” entirely from that of other Aboriginal people.¹⁹ In Gall’s 1934 memorandum in which he revealed fears about the future of Aboriginal people in Queensland, he exempted Torres Strait Islanders. He argued that they did not need significant amounts of government aid, but stressed that they should be protected from Europeanisation.²⁰ In the late 1930s, a government document stated that they had been “protected from interference and contamination and [therefore] have remained true to type, the development in civilisation having been kept as closely as possible to native lines, avoiding undue Europeanisation.”²¹

¹⁷ Henry Reynolds and Dawn May, “Queensland”, in Ann McGrath, ed., *Contested ground: Australian Aborigines under the British Crown* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995), p. 196; Alan Williamson, *Schooling the Torres Strait Islanders 1873 to 1941: context custom and colonialism* (Underdale: Aboriginal Research Institute Publications, Faculty of Aboriginal and Islander Studies, University of South Australia, 1994), p. 13.

¹⁸ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, 1938, pp. 2-4, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915 (JWB/FA), Queensland State Archives.

¹⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 112 (9 October 1912), p. 1608.

²⁰ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 5, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²¹ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals during the term of office of the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, MLA, Home Secretary (June 1932 to

In many ways, it is harder to determine the influence of eugenic ideology on debates about race than on other areas. This was especially true for Queensland, in light of the fact that the eugenics movement as a formal entity did not have strong support in the state. Eugenic ideas about race owed a great debt to older forms of “scientific” racism, and were sometimes indistinguishable from these older beliefs.²² In one sense, eugenics refers only to concerns about the “wellbornness” of the race. In this sense, any concerns about racial fitness and racial purity could be considered eugenic. Such fears, however, have a long history. It is necessary to make some distinction between older racist ideas and eugenics, while acknowledging the continuity between these theories.²³ One difference was the eugenic claim to scientific accuracy, and its focus on heredity.²⁴ Another was the insistence of eugenicists that the state should become responsible for racial fitness. Debate in Queensland about Aboriginal people certainly focused on fears about racial purity,

date), p. 6, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915 (JWB/FA), Queensland State Archives. See also see also Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, p. 2, A/58915, Queensland State Archives, in which it was stated that government policy towards the “semi-civilised” Torres Strait Islanders was to protect them from “contamination and exploitation”. The phrase “contamination” was often used to indicate the incidence of venereal disease (see for example *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (20 November 1934), p. 1555).

²² Banton, *Racial theories*, p. 91; Barkan, *The retreat of scientific racism*, pp. 2-3; Allan Chase, *The legacy of Malthus: the social costs of the new scientific racism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 2-23; Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, pp. 111, 127-28.

²³ It must also, of course, be noted that eugenicists were not inevitably racist, although this was often the case (Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, pp. 124-25).

²⁴ Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, p. 134. An emphasis on heredity was not unique, as nineteenth century adherents to phrenology had made many similar arguments (Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, p. 99). See also Axel Liégois, “Hidden philosophy and theology in Morel’s theory of degeneration and nosology”, *History of Psychiatry*, 2 (1991), p. 425.

and there was a widespread belief that they were limited by their heredity.²⁵ The Queensland government also attempted to control the reproduction of Aboriginal people, and one of the reasons articulated for this was to secure racial purity and safeguard the “fitness” of the white race.²⁶ Therefore, although there was no explicit statement of eugenic influence, the treatment of non-European races in Queensland reflected a range of ideas that were connected to eugenic philosophy.

The “White Australia” policy demonstrated the influence of concerns about improving the race, and about racial purity.²⁷ It comprised a number of pieces of legislation aimed at maintaining the “purity” of the white race in Australia, and encompassed three main aspects.²⁸ The first was the exclusion or restriction of entry of certain immigrants to the country, the deportation of some residents and the forcible movement of

²⁵ J. W. Bleakley, *The Aborigines of Australia: their history, their habits, their assimilation* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1961), pp. 308, 314-19; Andrew Markus, *Governing savages* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990), p. 39.

²⁶ Evans, *Fighting words*, see especially “The duty we owe ...’: Aborigines and state control in Queensland, 1915-1957”, pp. 147-65; Jackie Huggins and Thom Blake, “Protection or persecution?: gender relations in the era of racial segregation”, in Saunders and Evans, *Gender relations in Australia*, p. 46. Attempts to control the reproductive capacity of Aboriginal people were not confined to Queensland. See Warwick Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness: science, health and racial destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), pp. 219-20; Haebich, *For their own good*, pp. 116-18; Fiona Paisley, *Loving protection?: Australian feminism and Aboriginal women’s rights 1919-1939* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2000), pp. 83-4; C. D. Rowley, *Outcasts in white Australia* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1970), p. 4.

²⁷ Humphrey McQueen, *A new Britannia: an argument concerning the social origins of Australian radicalism and nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin, 1986), pp. 34-5; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 225, 227, 235, 251.

²⁸ “Racial hygiene: Judge Bevan’s comments”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 June 1927, p. 8; Margaret Conley, “Citizens! – protect your birthright: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW”, *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), p. 8; Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 272; Michael Roe, *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought 1890-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 19.

others around the country.²⁹ The fundamental act of the policy was the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901.³⁰ The second aspect encompassed policies that were likely to result in the extermination of some groups, or at least restrictions on their opportunities for reproduction.³¹ The third was the denial or restriction of citizenship to certain racial groups and other measures to segregate such groups from mainstream Australia. There were several instances of legislated discrimination in employment.³² Queensland was one of the worst states in this regard, as the government introduced more than thirty separate acts restricting occupational freedom.³³

Racial antagonism reached a peak in Queensland during the late nineteenth century.³⁴ At this time, the Queensland press, especially the working class press, was particularly concerned with racial ideas, in comparison to the press in other states.³⁵ Evans contends that this antagonism was not due to economic competition, as earlier historians

²⁹ Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, p. 88; Andrew Markus, *Australian race relations 1788-1993* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994), p. 110.

³⁰ Palfreeman, *The administration of the White Australia Policy*, p. 81. The second major act of the policy was the *Pacific Island Labourers' Act* of 1906.

³¹ McQueen, *A new Britannia*, p. 39; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 237-39.

³² Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 120.

³³ The Queensland government also specified under certain acts (for example, the *Sugar Bounty Act*, the *Wood Pulp and Rock Phosphate Act* of 1912, and the *Apple Bounty Act* of 1918) that financial assistance would be given to those businesses that used exclusively white labour (Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 120).

³⁴ Raymond Evans, "Keep white the strain': race relations in a colonial setting", in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, pp. 4-5; Kay Saunders, *Workers in bondage: the origins and bases of unfree labour in Queensland 1824-1916* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, p. 1982), p. 163; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 205-6, 220.

³⁵ Evans, *Fighting words*, p. 43.

argued, but was based on eugenic and hygienic concerns.³⁶ In 1902, when Queensland parliament debated the possibility of amending the *Naturalization of Aliens Act* of 1867 in order to allow naturalised aliens to be elected to parliament, these racial attitudes were evident.³⁷ The object of the amendment was to give full citizenship rights to naturalised aliens of European or North American citizenship.³⁸ This amendment encountered enormous opposition from those who were afraid it would allow naturalised aliens of these nations, but not of a “white” race, to serve in parliament.³⁹ A. H. Barlow wanted the amendment passed, but with the addition of a clause to prevent “any Asiatic, African, or Polynesian alien from coming under its provisions.”⁴⁰ Callan was concerned that a clause which extended full citizenship rights to a naturalised person who was originally “a native of a North American state” would include Mexicans and Eskimos. A. J. Thynne, who introduced the bill, attempted to counter these objections by arguing that although the term “North American” was ambiguous, it was “understood that it refers to white races.”⁴¹

³⁶ Evans, *Fighting words*, p. 43; “Keep white the strain”, pp. 4-5. See also Gibb, *The making of “white Australia”*, pp. 59-60.

³⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (6 and 12 November 1902), pp. 1084, 1153.

³⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (20 November 1902), p. 1281.

³⁹ The 1867 act allowed for the naturalisation of those of European, American, African or Asiatic descent (Kay Saunders, “Massa Palmer’s black labourer”: the fear of social contamination”, in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, p. 154). Naturalised Chinese people were precluded from serving in parliament under the *Aliens Act* of 1876 (Kathryn Cronin, “On a fast boat to Queensland: the Chinese influx onto Queensland’s goldfields”, in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, p. 269).

⁴⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (12 November 1902), p. 1154.

⁴¹ Thynne was a leading Brisbane solicitor, and later Chairman of the State Recruiting Committee (D. J. Murphy, “Abolition of the Legislative Council”, in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, *Labor in power: the Labor party and*

During the committee stage of the debate, the racial problem was raised immediately. Thynne and Barlow had together drafted a clause in which the phrase "Asiatic or African aliens" was replaced with the phrase "alien by lineage belonging to any of the Asiatic, African, or Polynesian races".⁴² Thus, the previously unclear phrase that had referred to nationality was replaced by one which explicitly referred to race. Callan, however, was still worried about the inclusion of the coloured races of North American citizenship. This amended clause was eventually agreed upon, so that rights under the act would depend on race rather than place of birth.⁴³ At this point, however, the questions of race, place of birth and naturalisation, as opposed to simply being a British subject became confused, as many questions were raised.⁴⁴ This confusion, combined with ongoing concerns, despite Thynne's repeated denials, that the act would constitute an amendment of the *Constitution Act*, eventually led to the bill being defeated by a majority division.⁴⁵ These attitudes were concerned with many racial ideas, focusing on the supposed inferiority of other races and a desire to maintain a "white" Australia. Thus, they reflect the desire to keep non-white races from serving in parliament, and

governments in Queensland 1915-57 (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 100; Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), p. 37).

⁴² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (20 November 1902), p. 1281.

⁴³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (26 November 1902), p. 1359.

⁴⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (26 November 1902), p. 1360.

⁴⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 90 (27 November 1902), p. 1383.

the obsession with improving the “Australian” race by excluding certain racial groups from mainstream society.

During the early twentieth century, articles in the Queensland press about non-European races focused on two widely held views: that the physical fitness of most non-white races was impressive, but that their intellect was less than adequate. Their intellectual capacity was always judged in comparison to that of the British race, and was always found inferior. Some commentators observed that individuals of other races displayed original thought, a fact that was always reported with surprise. These articles did not always appear in the popular press. In 1908, the Queensland *Education Office Gazette* published an article on Chinese school boys, in which surprise at their originality, depth and complexity of thought was repeatedly expressed, both by the author of the article and by editorial comment.⁴⁶

In 1914, similar attitudes were displayed in an article by “H. N. L.” entitled “The Traveller”. H. N. L. displayed a certain respect for the physical prowess of the men of Papua New Guinea, implying that they were more masculine than many European men.⁴⁷ His statement that “judging by the number of babies one sees about, there is no decline of

⁴⁶ A. Morris, “Mental and moral characteristics of Chinese boys”, *Education Office Gazette, Queensland*, 10, 6 (1908), pp. 182-83.

⁴⁷ “A trip to Papua – II: the native population: some of their characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 May 1914, p. 16.

the birth rate there"⁴⁸ also expressed contemporary fears about the decline of the white birth-rate in Australia.⁴⁹ H. N. L. also stated that they were "more intelligent than many people are inclined to give them credit for."⁵⁰ This intelligence, however, had strict limits, as the author saw it only in terms of the type of worker it produced.⁵¹ Many people argued that so-called savage races were more virile than Europeans, but needed European control.⁵² Raphael Cilento was one of those who voiced these beliefs, in his diary for 1919, recording his account of a trip to the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea.⁵³ It was also obvious in his work entitled "The black war in Queensland". In this essay, Cilento wrote that Aborigines were "unquestionably ... primitive stone age savages", but there were also many examples of "their loyalty and devotion to white masters".⁵⁴

⁴⁸ "A trip to Papua", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 May 1914, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and reproductive imperatives", in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, eds, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), pp. 158, 168-71; Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia Volume 4: The succeeding age: 1901-1942* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 34-5; David Walker, *Anxious nation: Australia and the rise of Asia 1850-1939* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰ "A trip to Papua", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 May 1914, p. 16.

⁵¹ He discussed the differences between tribes in these terms, stating that "Those from some tribes are better for some classes of work than others" (*Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 May 1914, p. 16).

⁵² Raymond Evans, "Harlots and helots: exploitation of the Aboriginal remnant", pp. 115-16, and Kay Saunders, "'Frolicsome urchins?': the 'reliable' servant", pp. 163-65, both in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*; Russell McGregor, "The doomed race: a scientific axiom of the late nineteenth century", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 39, 1 (1993), pp. 15-16.

⁵³ Sir Raphael Cilento, the Sepik River expedition February 20 - March 10, 1919, diary, pp. 5-6, UQFL MSS 44/18, Box 11, Fryer Library.

⁵⁴ Cilento, "The black war in Queensland", UQFL MSS 44/46, Box 14, Fryer Library.

In a 1920 article, Mrs Lance Rawson, a correspondent to the *Queenslander* writing from north Queensland, discussed her Kanaka servants. The article was titled "Primitive woman", and the author stated that although she was "exceedingly fond" of Dinah, the subject of the article, Dinah was "frankly immoral".⁵⁵ Rawson stated that she had "never met a black" that did have morals.⁵⁶ She also described Dinah as having "some very funny ways, which one could hardly reconcile with civilised life."⁵⁷ Rawson stressed that Dinah, in spite of these "funny ways", and her lack of morals, was an excellent and "loyal" servant.⁵⁸ In other articles, she found people of other races amusing, often in situations that had caused pain and distress to the people she was discussing.⁵⁹

Rawson also described her German neighbours:

I said that I was for thirteen months at Bonoro and never saw a white woman during that time. That is not quite true, for Mrs. Grutt, the professor's wife, was with us for many months; but somehow or other she never appealed to me as a white woman ...⁶⁰

Rawson further described both the Grutts as "intensely funny, and often, very childish. ... they would quarrel over the simplest matter, and be

⁵⁵ "Making the best of it: Mrs. Lance Rawson's reminiscences", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 February 1920, p. 5.

⁵⁶ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 February 1920, p. 5.

⁵⁷ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 February 1920, p. 5.

⁵⁸ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 February 1920, p. 5.

⁵⁹ See for example: *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1920, p. 5; *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 April 1920, p. 6.

⁶⁰ "Making the best of it: more of Mrs. Lance Rawson's reminiscences: the Grutts", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 5.

quite bitter over it, too".⁶¹ This attitude is interesting, as in the 1910s, Germans were often depicted in Queensland newspapers as ideal immigrants, healthy and hardworking.⁶² It is likely that the change in attitude was due to the war. The implication that Germans were not really members of the "white" race was one result of the propaganda efforts that were directed against this group during the war.⁶³ It reflects the precarious nature of definitions of the "white" race, which could be shifted to accommodate contemporary anxieties.⁶⁴ The Grutts only had one ability that commanded Rawson's respect:

... and that was the ability to make the blacks work, and not only work but learn how. They both had infinite patience, and a gift to recognise and bringing [sic] out intelligence in the blacks.⁶⁵

Once again, intelligence in certain races was only recognised in terms of their value as workers.

⁶¹ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 5.

⁶² "Blocked German immigrants", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 January 1910, p. 3; "German immigrants", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 June 1910, p. 39.

⁶³ Evans argues that there was an abrupt increase in hostility towards German people with the outbreak of World War I, and that this hostility continued into the postwar period (*Fighting words*, p. 31).

⁶⁴ Evans, "Keep white the strain", pp. 4-5. During the 1920s, hostility towards Italians working in the sugar industry resulted in suggestions that they were not members of the white race (Lyn Henderson, "Economic or racist?: Australia's reactions to Italians in north Queensland, 1921-1939", in Henry Reynolds, ed., *Race relations in north Queensland* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1978), pp. 327-33). The 1925 Ferry report confirmed these racial prejudices (Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp. 69-70; Henderson, "Economic or racist?", p. 335). For general examinations of "whiteness" see Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 42-7; Belinda Mackay, ed., *Unmasking whiteness: race relations and reconciliation* (Nathan: Queensland Studies Centre, Griffith University, 1999).

⁶⁵ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 5.

It appears that the *Week* was less concerned with racial purity, and more prepared to recognise value in non-European races than were other sources in Queensland at this time. For example, in 1910, this newspaper published a series of articles on the Spice Islands. The author of these articles adopted an undeniably condescending attitude towards the Bandanese, but the most scorn was reserved for the Dutch inhabitants of the island and their lack of physical vigour.⁶⁶ The “corpulent Dutchmen” were criticised for sleeping with their windows closed because they are afraid of malaria: “Such thoughts never worried any of us Australians, and the whole time we were there not one of us had sign of fever in any form.”⁶⁷ In the same year, a feature article on the history of Britain announced that there was no longer any such thing as “a pure or primitive race”, and that all races were mixed and had had similar stages of development.⁶⁸ This article did reiterate the common belief that Aboriginal people were representative of a “primeval” stage of development, the nomadic. It also displayed the prevalent idea that the “survival of the fittest” applied to the development of human society in arguing that the fittest nomadic peoples in Britain survived to become the ancient Britons, while “the weak were annihilated or absorbed by the strong.”⁶⁹ The conclusion, however, argued that regardless of the blow to

⁶⁶ “Tour to the Spice Islands: along an unbeaten track”, *Week* (Brisbane), 3 June 1910, p. 9.

⁶⁷ “Tour to the Spice Islands”, *Week* (Brisbane), 3 June 1910, p. 9.

⁶⁸ “British Islands: peopled and developed”, *Week* (Brisbane), 6 May 1910, p. 27.

⁶⁹ “British Islands”, *Week* (Brisbane), 6 May 1910, p. 27.

British racial pride, "types of every race that ever lived in those isles" were still to be found there.⁷⁰

The *Week's* attitudes were unusual in Queensland at this time. Generally, any suggestion of inter-racial breeding was condemned as a threat to racial purity. Fears of miscegenation had a long history, but were particularly emphasised by eugenicists in the early twentieth century.⁷¹ In 1910, in its regular Science and Nature section, the *Queenslander* published what purported to be an interview of sorts with a man whose father had been white, while his mother was Maori.⁷² The man was quoted as saying that no "half-castes", of any race, could be trusted, either by themselves or anyone else. This was because the

... mixture of white and coloured blood is physiologically and psychologically wrong, and produces a being divided against himself; at one moment despising the black in him, at the next resenting and loathing the white. ... The half-caste must ever be unstable: you appeal to the white in him, the black deceive you; you subjugate the black, the white is up in arms against you.⁷³

⁷⁰ "British Islands", *Week* (Brisbane), 6 May 1910, p. 27.

⁷¹ C. W. Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture: an outline of eugenics* (London: Cassell, 1909), p. xii; Garland E. Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, 1910-1940: an essay in institutional history", *Osiris*, 2nd series, 2 (1986), p. 232; Catrine Clay and Michael Leapman, *Master race: the Lebensborn experiment in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), pp. 11-14, pp. 21-3; Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 57; Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Introduction", in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p. 8; R. Grant Steen, *DNA and destiny: nature and nurture in human behaviour* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1996), p. 40. G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain 1900-1914*, (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976), p. 43, argues that it was never as important an issue in the British movement as it was in the American.

⁷² "Cultured white and savage black: the half-caste", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 12 February 1910, p. 32.

⁷³ "Cultured white and savage black", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 12 February 1910, p. 32.

This pseudo-scientific language revealed the eugenic fears underlying the subject. The article continued that this man was unable to fit into either the white or black community. He had wanted to be a doctor, but his father realised “too late” that he could not trust his son in such a profession.⁷⁴ It was inevitable, the man continued, that he would be “drawn” back into the Maori world, as all “half-castes” would be drawn back to their non-white origins: “down goes culture and the white beneath a savagedom bearing all the vices of civilisation to add to its horrors.”⁷⁵ Later, after his display of weakness made inevitable by his inherited taint, he would be racked with “self-contempt and remorse”.⁷⁶ The eugenic overtones of this article were made apparent in the conclusion, in which the man stated that he would not father children “to endure such tortures as this”.⁷⁷ Concerns about miscegenation will be seen more clearly in debate about the Aboriginal population of Queensland.

These articles demonstrate that there was a hierarchy of racial worth, and that there was a link between race and mental capacity, ideas that were common in scientific and popular thought in the early twentieth

⁷⁴ “Cultured white and savage black”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 12 February 1910, p. 32.

⁷⁵ “Cultured white and savage black”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 12 February 1910, p. 32.

⁷⁶ “Cultured white and savage black”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 12 February 1910, p. 32.

⁷⁷ “Cultured white and savage black”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 12 February 1910, p. 32.

century.⁷⁸ These ideas were not eugenic in themselves, but they represented the belief that white and non-white races were inherently different, and that non-white races were inherently mentally inferior, leading to a conviction that the races should be kept separate in order to maintain their purity and fitness.⁷⁹ In 1920, such ideas were explicitly articulated in an editorial in the *Queenslander* entitled "Racial equality", which stated that:

The demand of Japan for equality in the League of Nations is in the ultimate a figment, because it covers the claim for racial equality. The latter is self-contradictory, for it is in direct opposition to all that we know of national development in evolution. There can no more be racial equality than there can be mental equality.⁸⁰

The newspaper went on to argue that all other questions, and even "the safety of Australia" were dependent on denying racial equality:

The brotherhood of man infers, from the very facts of the figure of speech, that there are elder and younger members of the race, and surely this at once and fully denies racial equality.⁸¹

It concluded that "If the door to racial equality is open, in that opening a glimpse will be obtained of the future downfall of Western civilisation."⁸²

⁷⁸ Banton, *The idea of race*, p. 55; Gilman, *Difference and pathology*, pp. 135-36, 154-55; Guthrie, *Even the rat was white*, pp. 82-4; Gerald Vincent O'Brien, "Protecting the social body: use of the organism metaphor in fighting the 'menace of the feeble-minded'", *Mental Retardation*, 37, 3 (1999), p. 191; Charles Prudhomme and David F. Musto, "Historical perspectives on mental health and racism in the United States", in Charles V. Willie, Bernard M. Kramer and Bertram S. Brown, eds, *Racism and mental health: essays* ([Pittsburgh]: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), p. 39; Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. xi.

⁷⁹ Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 83-90; McGregor, *Imagined destinies*, p. 44.

⁸⁰ "Racial equality", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 16.

⁸¹ "Racial equality", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 16.

⁸² "Racial equality", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 16.

This article was representative of many beliefs about race in Queensland in the first half of the twentieth century. It made an explicit link, by analogy, between race and mental capacity. It also argued that an acknowledgement of racial equality would lead to the downfall of Western civilisation, and expressed further fears that if racial equality were acknowledged, it would lead to “Eastern” dominance. The editorial stated that racial equality was “only the old question of the mastery of East or West”, and that although Eastern civilisation and religion should be respected, if either was adopted, “we disown all that we have fought for, all that we believe in.”⁸³ It argued that to permit unrestricted Japanese immigration was tantamount to allowing Japanese dominance of Australia:

... assent to racial equality would mean the free immigration of Japanese into all countries under the mandate of the League of Nations, and it is not difficult to realise what that would mean in the Pacific. It would mean the negation of the principle held by all the Western Powers that racial equality is a figment.⁸⁴

This article encompassed fears about invasion as well as beliefs about the fundamental differences between races that were not unusual in Queensland or Australia at this time.⁸⁵ Non-European colonists were seen as hard workers with lower standards of ambition than Europeans,

⁸³ “Racial equality”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 16.

⁸⁴ “Racial equality”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 16. Fears of Japanese invasion were widespread during the early 1920s, although there was caution in expressing them, as Japan was still allied with Britain (Laurie, “Race relations in Australia in the 1920s”, p. 2).

⁸⁵ Macintyre, *The succeeding age*, p. 35; Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 4-8; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 19-20, 29, 31.

which made them threatening.⁸⁶ The 1934 book *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's national decline*, written by the Brisbane psychiatrists John Bostock and Leslie Nye, displayed similar fears. This book opened with a frontispiece consisting of a map showing Australia and its "Eastern" neighbours, with the population of each country written in bold type inside the borders.⁸⁷ Bostock and Nye stated in their preface that they had not, during the writing of the book, "become converted to the fallacy of the equality of man".⁸⁸ One of the first statements in the text was the claim that evolution was relentless.⁸⁹ They also claimed that there was a "Rising tide of the East", where "frugal and industrious coloured people" were breeding, and planning to come to Australia.⁹⁰ The fear displayed about the rate of reproduction of non-European races was linked to eugenic theories about differential birth-rates and racial deterioration.⁹¹

There was some influence of eugenic beliefs and ideas about racial fitness in discourse about non-European races other than Aborigines in

⁸⁶ Kathryn Cronin, "Orientals, leprosy-fitted/blood diseased and small-pox pitted": the urban anti-Chinese movement", in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, pp. 300-1; McQueen, *A new Britannia*, p. 40; A. T. Yarwood, "Attitudes to non-European migrants", in Stevens, *Racism*, pp. 173-76; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 197-98.

⁸⁷ John Bostock and L. Jarvis Nye, *Whither away?: a study of race psychology and the factors leading to Australia's national decline* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934).

⁸⁸ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. viii.

⁸⁹ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Bostock and Nye, *Whither away?*, pp. 6-7.

⁹¹ "Eugenics and the population", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 8; Clay and Leapman, *Master race*, p. 15; O'Brien, "Protecting the social body", p. 195; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 55-6; Richard Soloway, "The 'perfect contraceptive': eugenics and birth control research in Britain and America in the interwar years", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30, 4 (1995), pp. 638-39.

Queensland between 1900 and 1950. These beliefs were seen much more strongly, however, in debate about the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state. Aborigines were seen as “primitive”, “stone age” peoples.⁹² Sometimes the belief in the ancient date of Aboriginal origins was reported in an almost positive light. In 1914, the *Queenslander* felt that it provided Australia with a link to primitive man and primeval times.⁹³ In 1925, the *Queenslander* published an article by “Fabian” that contained high praise of Aboriginal hunting skills, love of nature, and folklore.⁹⁴ Fabian concluded that:

Few savage races have been so consistently maligned as the Australian blacks, who are even yet occasionally mentioned as lowest in the scale of humanity, though anthropologists place a dozen other peoples far below them.⁹⁵

“Fabian’s” weekly columns on the “Ways of the wild” generally focused on animal or plant life.⁹⁶ It is therefore noticeable that even positive articles about Aboriginal people tended to emphasise their role as part of the Australian landscape, and not as equals of the European population.

⁹² “Northern sketches: the priest of the parish”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 March 1914, p. 8; Cilento, “The black war in Queensland”, UQFL MSS 44/46, Box 14, Fryer Library. See also Raymond Evans, “‘A king of brutes’: stereotyping the vanquished”, in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, pp. 73-4, 82; Laurie, “Race relations in Australia in the 1920s”, pp. 16-17; Markus, *Governing savages*, p. 37; McGregor, “The doomed race”, pp. 14-15.

⁹³ “The kippa-ring and bull-roarer”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 24 January 1914, p. 29.

⁹⁴ “Ways of the wild: native naturalists”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 18 July 1925, p. 44.

⁹⁵ “Ways of the wild”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 18 July 1925, p. 44.

⁹⁶ See for example “Ways of the wild”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 23 July 1925, p. 44.

In the early twentieth century, Queensland was seen as the authority on the administration of Aboriginal affairs.⁹⁷ The 1897 act was used as a model for legislation in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia.⁹⁸ In 1931, the Association for the Protection of Native Races identified Queensland and Western Australia as the most advanced states in terms of policy towards Aboriginal people.⁹⁹ There was also a consensus that Aboriginal people in Queensland constituted a greater problem than those in Victoria or New South Wales.¹⁰⁰ In 1934 the Prime Minister argued that certain difficulties regarding the enrolment of Aborigines to vote identified by the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Queensland were not noticeable in other states.¹⁰¹ He suggested that this was because “natives” were closer to their wild state in Queensland: less educated and less capable of useful employment, or of voting “with a reasonable degree of intelligence.”¹⁰²

Government rhetoric and legislation in the early twentieth century in Queensland was focused on Aboriginal protection, largely due to the

⁹⁷ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, Aboriginal Protection Acts Queensland, p. 5, no date, in-letter not provided, A/8725, Queensland State Archives; Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 200.

⁹⁸ Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 171; Thorpe, “Archibald Meston”, p. 52.

⁹⁹ J. W. Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia: suggestions towards solving the problem* (Sydney: Association for the Protection of Native Races, 1931), p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Aboriginal welfare – initial conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal authorities, held at Canberra, 21st to 23rd April, 1937, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ J. Lyons, Prime Minister, Canberra to Deputy Premier of Queensland, Brisbane, 18 June 1934, in-letter 342 of 1934, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰² Prime Minister to Deputy Premier of Queensland, 18 June 1934, in-letter 342 of 1934, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

widely held belief that the Aboriginal race was dying out.¹⁰³ “White Australia” policies were employed towards Aboriginal people: although they could not be deported, they were removed from white population centres and denied entry into mainstream Australian life.¹⁰⁴ Evans argues that Aboriginal people were removed from mainstream society “because ultimately, like all institutionalized deviants, they did not fulfil a “worthwhile” utilitarian role.”¹⁰⁵ Although early advocates of the reserve system may well have been motivated by genuine humanitarian concerns, in practice, physically fit and employed Aborigines were left where they were, while those who were unable to work for various reasons were removed, thus suggesting that economic motives were also present.¹⁰⁶

The *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* of 1897 was influenced to some extent by humanitarian pressures on the government to protect the “dying race”; it is likely that the government

¹⁰³ Ann Curthoys, “Good Christians and useful workers: Aborigines, church and state in NSW 1870-1883”, in Sydney Labour History Group, ed., *What rough beast? : the state and social order in Australian history* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp. 34-5; Raymond Evans, “The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland”, in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), p. 93; McGregor, *Imagined destinies*, p. 58; Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, pp. 181-82.

¹⁰⁴ Paisley, *Loving protection?*, p. 65; Rowley, *Outcasts in white Australia*, pp. 4, 22.

¹⁰⁵ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 93.

¹⁰⁶ Thom Blake, “Deported ... At the sweet will of the government: the removal of Aborigines to reserves in Queensland 1897-1939”, *Aboriginal History*, 22 (1998), pp. 52-5; Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 93. See also Michel Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 49-50; Foucault argued that the confinement of certain sections of the population in Europe during the seventeenth century was motivated by economic considerations, and targeted the unemployed and “idle”.

viewed it as a short-term solution to a short-term problem.¹⁰⁷ The act was passed in 1897, and amendments were passed in 1901, 1927 and 1928 and 1934.¹⁰⁸ This act was the first instance of separate legal control of Aboriginal people in Queensland, and was much more restrictive than contemporary legislation for Aboriginal people in the rest of Australia.¹⁰⁹ Administrators of the act had extraordinary power over Aboriginal people. In 1898, Police Commissioner W. Parry-Okeden was responsible for the general administration of the act, assisted by Walter Roth as Northern Protector of Aboriginals, and Archibald Meston. Meston was the Southern Protector of Aboriginals from 1898 to 1904, and the chief architect of the 1897 act.¹¹⁰ Meston's views on Aboriginal people were complex, and were influenced by many contemporary strands of thought, among which were a repugnance towards the idea of miscegenation and a distaste for physical deformity, both of which were informed in part by eugenic ideology.¹¹¹ He also regarded urban life as a corrupt environment, peopled with the parasitic, effete, and physically unfit, who, at the same time, were engaged in a ruthless struggle for existence.¹¹² Meston was retrenched in 1903, and Walter Roth became the first Chief Protector of Aboriginals in Queensland.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Reynolds and May, "Queensland", pp. 181-82.

¹⁰⁸ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰⁹ Reynolds and May, "Queensland", p. 182.

¹¹⁰ Thorpe, "Archibald Meston", p. 55.

¹¹¹ Thorpe, "Archibald Meston", pp. 60-3.

¹¹² Thorpe, "Archibald Meston", pp. 59-60.

¹¹³ Rosalind Kidd, *The way we civilise: Aboriginal Affairs – the untold story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), p. 56; Reynolds and May, "Queensland", p. 183. By this time, Roth's scientific training and anthropological interests were favoured over Meston's personal experience with Aboriginal people, although in the event Roth was

The focus on the “protection” of Aboriginal people was almost always at the expense of Aboriginal agency. Under the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* of 1897, the minister had the power to remove any Aboriginal person to a reserve or mission, supposedly in the interests of the person.¹¹⁴ Only those in employment were exempted from this clause.¹¹⁵ Once an order for removal was given, Aboriginal people had no redress.¹¹⁶ The power of removal was used extensively by protectors in order to discipline troublesome, unemployed, and “half-caste” Aboriginal people.¹¹⁷ It was thus used to govern behaviour, and it caused a great deal of anxiety among Aboriginal people.¹¹⁸ The governor also had a great deal of power over Aboriginal lives: he could declare districts, and appoint protectors, and superintendents on reserves.¹¹⁹ Protectors were required to supervise all Aboriginal adults in employment, and there were even stricter regulations governing female

forced out of the position after only two years, due to pressure from pastoralist groups (Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 294).

¹¹⁴ *An act to make provision for the better protection and care of the Aboriginal and Half-caste inhabitants of the colony, and to make more effectual provision for restricting the sale and distribution of opium* (to be cited as the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897), 61 Vic. no. 17, s. 9.

¹¹⁵ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897, 61 Vic. no. 17, s. 10.

¹¹⁶ Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 188.

¹¹⁷ Blake, “Deported ... At the sweet will of the government”, pp. 52, 59-60; Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 186-87.

¹¹⁸ Timothy Bottoms, *Djabugay country: an Aboriginal history of tropical north Queensland* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1999), pp. 50-1, 60-1; Broome, *Aboriginal Australians*, p. 103; Jackie Huggins, *Sister girl: the writings of an Aboriginal activist and historian* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1998), pp. 43-4; Huggins and Huggins, *Auntie Rita*, pp. 9-12, 34-7.

¹¹⁹ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897, 61 Vic. no. 17, ss. 5-6.

“half-castes” in employment.¹²⁰ It was clear that this concern for female “half-castes” was related in part to fears of miscegenation.¹²¹

Archibald Meston stated in an early report that he wished to establish Aboriginal settlements and completely isolate them from contact with the white races.¹²² The *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* contained provisions for complete segregation along racial lines on reserves. The development of segregation as a tool of power used to deal with “problem” populations has been examined by several historians.¹²³ No non-Aboriginal person, except superintendents or those acting under their direction was permitted on a reserve, and no Aboriginal “inmates”, as they were termed in the legislation, were allowed

¹²⁰ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897, 61 Vic. no. 17, ss. 12-16.

¹²¹ The eugenics movement characterised all Aboriginal women as “morally feeble-minded”, and stated that they needed to be segregated for the protection of the white race: Heather Goodall and Jackie Huggins, “Aboriginal women are everywhere: contemporary struggles”, in Saunders and Evans, *Gender relations in Australia*, pp. 398-99. See also Rosemary Berreen, “Illegitimacy and ‘feeble-mindedness’ in early twentieth-century New South Wales”, in Jane Long, Jan Gothard and Helen Brash, eds, *Forging identities: bodies, gender and feminist history* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1997), p. 219.

¹²² Extract from Queensland Aboriginals: proposed system for the improvement and preservation: addressed to the Honourable Horace Tozer, Colonial Secretary of Queensland by Archibald Meston, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58909, Queensland State Archives.

¹²³ Michel Foucault has examined possible motivations for this phenomenon, in *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1927-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 166-68; *Madness and civilization*, pp. 43-51; *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 24-8; and *The history of sexuality Volume I: an introduction* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 30. See also Stanley Cohen, *Visions of social control: crime, punishment and classification* (New York: Polity Press, 1985); Raymond Evans, “A permanent precedent”: dispossession, social control and the Fraser Island Reserve and Mission, 1897-1904, *Ngulaig*, monograph 5, (St Lucia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland, 1991), pp. 14-17; Mark Finnane, *Colonisation and incarceration: the criminal justice system and Aboriginal Australians* (London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1997).

out without the superintendent's permission.¹²⁴ Any person, excluding superintendents and protectors, who was found on or near an encampment of Aboriginal or "half-caste" women, without written permission or a lawful excuse, with the burden of proof on them, would face a penalty of a fine up to fifty pounds, or three months imprisonment.¹²⁵ Segregation was a preferred solution for relationships between black and white people. At the Peel Island lazaret, even white and black lepers were segregated from each other, and there was some discussion about removing the white patients from the island.¹²⁶

This legislation also contained provisions for severe restrictions on marriages between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, a clause that was informed by eugenic fears of miscegenation. Marriages between Aboriginal people and people of other races were automatically assumed to be dysgenic. After 1901, Aboriginal women could not marry non-Aboriginal men without the permission of a district protector, authorised by the minister, a severe restriction.¹²⁷ In 1914, J. W. Bleakley was appointed as Chief Protector of Aboriginals, and proved even more concerned than his predecessors with minimising contact between black

¹²⁴ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897, 61 Vic. no. 17, s. 11.

¹²⁵ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897, 61 Vic. no. 17, s. 11.

¹²⁶ "Lazaret administration", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 March 1910, p. 31; "Room for the leper: visit to the lazarette: Peel Island Home for Inebriates", *Week* (Brisbane), 21 January 1910, p. 31.

¹²⁷ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1901, 2 Edw. VII no. 1, s. 9. Horace Tozer told parliament that this was the most important section of the bill; there was little debate over it (Blake, "Deported ... At the sweet will of the government", p. 51).

and white.¹²⁸ In 1934, additional restrictions were introduced in regard to any sexual relationships between Aboriginal women and men of other races that had not been officially sanctioned by the department in the form of permission to marry.¹²⁹ This legislation was not necessarily eugenic in intent, but it was indicative of the intense interest that the government took in the private lives of Aboriginal people in Queensland at this time. This interest was explicitly concerned with their reproductive capacity. It is worth noting that it was one of the major aims of many international eugenic organisations to promote legislation for marriage restrictions along eugenic lines.¹³⁰ It should also be noted that miscegenation was linked to various hygienic, as well as eugenic, fears in popular discourse at this time, including discussion about contagion of leprosy.¹³¹ Thus, the 1897 act that provided a framework for the treatment of Aboriginal people in Queensland introduced many initiatives that, although not explicitly informed by eugenic ideology, had much in common with the goals of the eugenics movement. The attitudes towards and treatment of Aboriginal people between 1900 and 1950 were strongly influenced by beliefs about racial purity and fitness.

¹²⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (29 October 1914), p. 1614. See also Huggins and Blake, "Protection or persecution?", p. 46.

¹²⁹ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, s. 9.

¹³⁰ "A plea for regulated marriages", *The Times* (London), 6 February 1912, p. 10; Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 10; Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office", p. 240.

¹³¹ Blake, "Deported ... At the sweet will of the government", p. 53; Evans, "The hidden colonists", p. 92.

Protection and degeneration

During the early part of the twentieth century there was little call for state control of the reproduction of Aboriginal people, for the simple reason that they were generally considered to be dying out.¹³² The “doomed race” theory was a Social Darwinist idea, and in this sense had some links with eugenics.¹³³ Both ideologies argued that the laws of natural selection were operating in society, and that no action should be taken to interfere with them. Most believed that the “disappearance” of “inferior” races before the white race was inevitable.¹³⁴ Galton made a connection between animals dying in captivity and the “disappearance of most savage races when brought into contact with high civilisation”.¹³⁵

Those who adhered to the “doomed race” theory argued that, in the case of Aboriginal people, the laws of natural selection were operating. The

¹³² “A vanishing race”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1927, p. 10; Curthoys, “Good Christians and useful workers”, pp. 34-5; Mary Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency”, *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), pp. 43-4; McGregor, *Imagined destinies*, p. 14; Sharyn Pearce, “The best career is matrimony: first-wave journalism and the Australian Girl”, *Hecate*, 18, 2 (1998), pp. 71-2. It is important to note that the belief that Aborigines were a “doomed race” generally ignored European contributions, in the form of large scale violence and the spread of disease, to their demise. See Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, for a thorough account of such interactions during the colonial period in Queensland. See also I. L. Hughes, “‘A state of open warfare’: frontier violence in the Cooktown district”, and Henry Reynolds, “Racial violence in north Queensland”, both in *Lectures on north Queensland history: second series* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1975), pp. 21-30; Reynolds, *An indelible stain?: the question of genocide in Australia’s history* (Ringwood: Penguin, 2001), pp. 35-48, 119-38.

¹³³ McGregor, *Imagined destinies*, pp. 30-1; Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, pp. 175-76.

¹³⁴ Evans, “Keep white the strain”, pp. 12-14; Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory*, pp. 104, 117, 123.

¹³⁵ Francis Galton, “Eugenics: its definition, scope and aims”, in *Essays in eugenics* (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1909), p. 39.

Queenslander summarised these arguments in an 1889 editorial, when it stated that some people were reluctant to do anything without consulting “the latest theories of progress”:

... we hesitate to give our sixpence to the beggar on the street lest the rash act should interfere with the regulated processes of racial evolution. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest as the inexorable law of progress has taken such hold upon belief that it not only, as has been said, “now exists in the public mind as an underlying axiom”, but is apparently by some minds assumed to be invested with an ethical authority to which even the most sovereign instincts of native goodness must be subordinated.¹³⁶

The *Queenslander* was reluctant to believe that anyone actually adhered to “this extreme view”, or would put it into practice. It did acknowledge, however, that some people believed that the current state of Aboriginal people was the “logical outcome’ of the philosophy of Evolution.¹³⁷ It stated that such people believed that “these aborigines are inexorably doomed to perish on account of their very unfitness”, and saw the inevitable extinction of the Aboriginal race as “a beneficent process of decay which leaves the earth and the fulness thereof to those who are best fitted to make the most of them”.¹³⁸

The *Queenslander* countered this argument by stating that the law of evolution only described facts, and did not prescribe morality; it mocked those who argued that it did. Despite the *Queenslander’s* statements, the

¹³⁶ “Darwinism and the Aborigines”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 November 1889, p. 825.

¹³⁷ “Darwinism and the Aborigines”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 November 1889, p. 825.

¹³⁸ “Darwinism and the Aborigines”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 November 1889, p. 825.

“doomed race” theory persisted, and many people continued to believe that nothing should be done to prevent its fulfillment. In some cases, people even suggested that the process should be expedited. In a newspaper clipping kept at the Queensland State Archives, “Trotter” described what he claimed were the horrific conditions of Aboriginal people at Maytown.¹³⁹ He argued that Roth and Meston should visit the town, and observe the conditions of Aboriginal people there for themselves:

The poor, half-starved, emaciated blacks are in the last stage of a disease that is never mentioned in polite society. Men, women and children are in a fearful condition, and it would be a perfect god-send to put them out of their misery.¹⁴⁰

The fears expressed in this article were both hygienic and eugenic. The Aboriginal people who were the subject of the article were clearly suffering from venereal disease. Trotter’s suggestion that they should be put out of their misery goes beyond a belief in the “doomed race” theory, to a statement with eugenic, indeed genocidal, overtones. Roth responded quickly to the publication of this article, writing to the *Bulletin* to refute all the claims made by the author.¹⁴¹ It is likely that his assertions were exaggerated, if not completely false, but the attitude of

¹³⁹ Article from the *Bulletin*, p. 16, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁴⁰ Article from the *Bulletin*, p. 16, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁴¹ Walter E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aboriginals, Cooktown to Editor of the *Bulletin*, 27 March 1902, in-letter not provided, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

the author was indicative of the views of many people towards Aboriginal people.¹⁴²

In 1912, the *Queenslander* reported in the Science and Nature Study section on the views of an anthropologist on the “disappearing” Aborigines.¹⁴³ This anthropologist divided Aboriginal people into classes based on “light and dark blood”, a fact that was reported uncritically by the newspaper.¹⁴⁴ Two years later, the *Queenslander* described Aboriginal people as “the remnants of one of the oldest races in the world”.¹⁴⁵ According to the newspaper, there was a growing conviction “that they belong to a low Caucasian type, dating back for a very long period.”¹⁴⁶ The article continued, stating that Aboriginal people were “a dying race; in a few generations they will be no more. ... We must help to carry the burden of these weak children of nature.”¹⁴⁷ In this argument, the *Queenslander* maintained consistency with its earlier editorial on the topic. The *Queenslander*’s views in the early 1910s that the state should act to prevent or at least abate the process of “survival of the fittest” were in opposition to eugenic philosophy. These opinions were not shared by many in Queensland at this time.

¹⁴² In the early 1880s, the editor of the *Normanton Herald* argued that it would be “more of a mercy than a crime to wipe [vagabond natives] off the face of the earth”, because they were nuisances, treacherous, drunkards, and syphilitic (quoted in Evans, “Keep white the strain”, p. 2).

¹⁴³ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 September 1912, p. 41.

¹⁴⁴ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 September 1912, p. 41.

¹⁴⁵ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

In fact, the following year, the same newspaper reported on the second of a series of science lectures held at the Brisbane Museum. This lecture was presented by Dr Hamlyn Harris, and was entitled "Echoes of man's past history".¹⁴⁸ Harris discussed the great interest "in the relationship between the early races of man and Australians, and more particularly of the Tasmanians, who were the most unprogressive in the world in the nineteenth century."¹⁴⁹ He stated that the Tasmanians were stone-age people, and continued that:

From what had been said and what the people of to-day knew it could be fairly assumed that a lower race of mankind inevitably disappeared when in contact with one higher in physical and mental capacity.¹⁵⁰

He expanded on this theme at length, before concluding that

... probably a similar struggle had been going on since the first advance began, which led to the development of man, and each successive step in his onward march had in like manner led to the extinction of the inferior race above whom he rose.¹⁵¹

The newspaper reported that Harris was warmly applauded. The belief that more "primitive" races inevitably "gave way" or were exterminated by stronger races was ingrained in popular consciousness at this time.¹⁵² This idea was instrumental in the treatment of the Aboriginal inhabitants

¹⁴⁸ Harris was the president of the Royal Society of Queensland and an associate of the Townsville Institute (Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, p. 138).

¹⁴⁹ "Man's past history", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 June 1913, p. 41.

¹⁵⁰ "Man's past history", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 June 1913, p. 41.

¹⁵¹ "Man's past history", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 June 1913, p. 41.

¹⁵² "History of the human race", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 March 1920, p. 3: contained a review of a book entitled *Introduction to anthropology*, by Reverend E. O. James.

of Queensland during this period, and had links to eugenics and ideas of racial fitness.

Belief in the “doomed race” theory persisted well into the twentieth century in Queensland.¹⁵³ In 1929, Bleakley expressed the satisfaction of the department in finding that the Aboriginal race was in fact not dying out.¹⁵⁴ Naturally, he attributed this fact to the care and protection of the department. Despite this, he did nothing to counter the belief when he agreed to answer a series of questions posed by the Association for the Protection of Native Races, the results of which were published in 1931 in the form of a pamphlet. The foreword to this pamphlet, written by the Reverend W. Morley, the Honorary Secretary of the Association, contained the statement that the Aboriginal population of Australia was disappearing.¹⁵⁵

As late as 1949, there was evidence of a continued belief in the “doomed race” theory. During this year, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Arthur Jones, visited Thursday Island. He devoted a section of his report to the question “Is the Queensland Aboriginal a dying race?”, concluding

¹⁵³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 112 (9 October 1912), p. 1607-8; “Disappearing Queensland”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 24 January 1920, p. 17. In Australia generally, the theory proved difficult to dispel, despite substantial evidence disproving it (McGregor, *Imagined destinies*, p. 16).

¹⁵⁴ J. W. Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1929”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 947.

¹⁵⁵ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 3.

that this was not the case.¹⁵⁶ As Bleakley had done, Jones attributed this solely to the care and protection of the government and missions. He stated that:

It was constantly proved that where aboriginals and half-bloods are under direct Mission influence, or under the influence of Government officers on Government Settlements, the population figures do not reveal a decrease.¹⁵⁷

In fact, a small increase in births was recorded, due, Jones claimed, to the greater attention given to welfare in these places, including regular feeding and clothing, care and protection of pregnant women, and controlled infant feeding.¹⁵⁸ Policies of “protection”, while patronising, were actually counter to eugenics, although they were concerned with racial fitness.

Many commentators in the first half of the twentieth century maintained that the condition of Aboriginal people at this time was the result of a degeneration of their race, caused by contact with white civilisation.¹⁵⁹ This belief led to further calls to “protect” the Aboriginal race. This view was exemplified by a 1901 article in the *Sydney Bulletin*, written by Ernest Favenc, a well known historian and explorer, and entitled “The

¹⁵⁶ Report on the visit of Mr Jones, Minister for Health and Home Affairs to Thursday Island, 1949, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58909, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁷ Report on the visit of Jones to Thursday Island, A/58909, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁸ Jones also stated that “clean, healthy and vigorous children [were] seen on every Mission visit.”

¹⁵⁹ The idea that degeneration would inevitably result from contact between a “superior” race and an “inferior” one was common at this time: Evans, “*A permanent precedent*”, pp. 11-13; McGregor, *Imagined destinies*, pp. 53-5; Saunders, *Workers in bondage*, p. 163.

neglected Aborigine".¹⁶⁰ Favenc argued that something should be done to protect Aboriginal people, and suggested a system of government controlled reserves, emphasising that he did not mean mission stations, which were run by churches. On these reserves, Favenc stated, Aboriginal people "could live in their old style as respectable savages instead of as station and township loafers."¹⁶¹ Favenc concluded that if such a scheme were to be instituted, it should be kept in mind that the only way to benefit an Aboriginal person was "to keep him an industrious savage, ... Any endeavour to make him a degenerate copy of a white man is bound to end in failure."¹⁶²

This article was collected by the Queensland government because Walter Roth, the Northern Protector of Aboriginals in the state, was anxious to reply to Favenc. Roth was mostly concerned with dispelling a rumour mentioned by Favenc that the Native Police in Queensland were being issued with blank cartridges.¹⁶³ In his reply, however, Roth also commended Favenc's "common sense" and humanitarianism, and stated that he wished he could have had more influence on the protection of Aboriginal people at the time of Federation, and allowed them some influence over their own lives.¹⁶⁴ He also stated that the Queensland

¹⁶⁰ "The neglected Aborigine", *Sydney Bulletin* (12 October 1901), p. 28, 14 October 1901, in-letter 16263 of 1901, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶¹ "The neglected Aborigine", A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶² "The neglected Aborigine", A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶³ Walter E. Roth to M. Ryder, Rockhampton, 20 October 1901, in-letter not provided, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁴ Copy of Roth's reply, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

government was currently instituting a system of reserves for the Aboriginal population of the state.¹⁶⁵ The view that the Aboriginal race had degenerated through contact with the white race indicated the influence of ideas about racial fitness and purity. It was in line with many older racist beliefs. The idea that segregation was the best solution indicated that control of the Aboriginal population was important. It also, as will be seen, indicated the presence of fears about miscegenation.

There were many other instances of the belief that the Aboriginal race had degenerated from its original, better, form. Meston was one of the strongest proponents of this view. William Thorpe states that Meston was contemptuous of what he termed "tame town blacks"; he believed that the "better types" of Aboriginal men and women were to be found away from settlements.¹⁶⁶ Meston further stated that these Aboriginal people themselves had "measureless contempt for the degenerates who begged from the whites ... and allowed themselves and women to be degraded, drunken and diseased."¹⁶⁷ Meston also argued that the preservation of Aboriginal culture was extremely important in countering the racial degeneration that he perceived among this population.¹⁶⁸ He was not alone in such beliefs, which were apparent from the early twentieth

¹⁶⁵ Copy of Roth's reply, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Thorpe, "Archibald Meston", p. 59.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Thorpe, "Archibald Meston", p. 59.

¹⁶⁸ Extract from Queensland Aboriginals: proposed system for the improvement and preservation: A/58909, Queensland State Archives; Thorpe, "Archibald Meston and Aboriginal legislation", p. 66.

century until well into the 1940s.¹⁶⁹ This was one reason why Torres Strait Islanders were often considered superior to mainland Aboriginal people: they were believed to have maintained their culture more successfully.¹⁷⁰

In 1900, the *Brisbane Courier* published an editorial discussing Walter Roth's efforts to control Aboriginal labour, and to improve efforts to carry out relief.¹⁷¹ The *Courier* found that:

The most painful matter touched on in the report, and indeed running through it from first to last, is the abuse arising from the intercourse of the white man with the black. The blacks who might be carelessly spoken of as the more civilised suffer the most.¹⁷²

The reason given for this was practical: it was stated that it was because these people had a greater knowledge of white vices such as alcohol, opium and venereal disease.¹⁷³ The language of the article, however, focused on contact between black and white as dangerous: "Generally the intercourse of white and black is deadly to the aboriginal."¹⁷⁴

It continued that Roth had "some terribly sad things to say about half-castes", and that it was his opinion that almost all the abuses that had

¹⁶⁹ "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4; Notes for assistance in description of the film – "The Aboriginal Problem in Queensland", p. 10, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58913 (JWB/VH), Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷⁰ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals during the term of office of the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, MLA, Home Secretary (June 1932 to date), p. 6, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915 (JWB/FA), Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷¹ "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

¹⁷² "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

¹⁷³ "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

¹⁷⁴ "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

come to his knowledge were the direct consequence of a freedom of intercourse between black and white.¹⁷⁵ It was Roth's aim, which the newspaper reported approvingly, that "some provision may shortly be made which will put an effectual bar to the practice".¹⁷⁶ Much of this commentary argued that it was non-European races, and particularly Chinese people, that were the worst offenders in regard to the exploitation and degradation of Aboriginal people.¹⁷⁷ These attitudes, typical of the time, were a complex mixture of practical and humanitarian concerns about the exploitation of Aboriginal people, and anxieties about miscegenation and racial deterioration.

In 1914, the *Queenslander* assured its readers that the Aboriginal people present in towns were not "typical", but "degenerate" examples of the race: "In the North one has seen blackfellows of really fine physique".¹⁷⁸ This view was also espoused in 1919 by Bleakley, when he stated that absorption of Aboriginal people into the white labour market had failed, "for the race are no further advanced socially; in fact, physically and morally they have degenerated."¹⁷⁹ Bleakley, more explicitly than the

¹⁷⁵ "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ "The northern Aboriginals", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ This was reflected in the fact that in 1901, when the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* was amended, one of the new provisions specifically prohibited Chinese people from employing Aboriginal people (2 Edw. VII no. 1, s. 5(2)). See also *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 19 March 1910, p. 9; *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 106 (20 October 1910), p. 1600; and Regina Ganter, "Living an immoral life – 'coloured' women and the paternalistic state", *Hecate*, 24, 1 (1998), pp. 13-14.

¹⁷⁸ "Aboriginal characteristics", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

¹⁷⁹ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 233.

Queenslander, blamed the “degeneration” of the Aboriginal race on contact with the white race.

Bleakley was not alone in identifying contact with the white race as the source of Aboriginal degeneration.¹⁸⁰ It was often “detribalised” Aborigines, said to be devastated by contact with white civilisation, who were identified as a problem.¹⁸¹ In 1920, as noted above, the *Queenslander* printed a series of articles by Mrs Lance Rawson from north Queensland. She discussed Aboriginal people several times, stating that she hated them all, and discussing murders of both individual Aborigines and groups of Aboriginal people in a disturbingly matter of fact manner.¹⁸² She stated that, in her experience, it would be better to let them die out, and continued that “All over the world, apparently, the black recedes before the white.”¹⁸³ It is interesting to note, however, that she blamed this situation on “the condition to which contact with the white – the so-called superior race – has reduced [them]”.¹⁸⁴ The attitudes expressed in this article indicate the complexity of much racial thinking at this time, allowing Rawson to blame the white race for the degeneration of the Aboriginal race, and at the same time argue that the Aboriginal race should be left to die out.

¹⁸⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 112 (9 October 1912), p. 1608.

¹⁸¹ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, pp. 2-3, A/58915, Queensland State Archives; Cilento, “Problems in the integration of stone age man”, p. 6, UQFL MSS 44/86, Box 17, Fryer Library.

¹⁸² “Making the best of it: Mrs. Lance Rawson’s reminiscences”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 March 1920, p. 5.

¹⁸³ “Making the best of it”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ “Making the best of it”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

One of the results of the belief that the Aboriginal race was degenerating, and that Aboriginal people were inherently “inferior” to whites, was the emphasis in government rhetoric on protection. In his report for 1919, Bleakley argued that the removal of women and children to mission stations was necessary, because it was only there that it would be “possible to afford them proper care and training and protect them from exploitation.”¹⁸⁵ For Bleakley, the idea that Aboriginal people were in continual need of the protection of the white race, and specifically of the department, was fundamental. He reiterated it throughout his tenure as Chief Protector. Removals of women and children to settlements and mission stations were usually due to reports of unsatisfactory conduct or living conditions. Bleakley often argued that they would receive better care and protection at the settlements or stations, and the children would be given schooling.¹⁸⁶ In 1931, he told the Association for the Protection of Native Races that although Aboriginal people were “human beings with a conflicting mixture of the civilised and the savage”, it was his view that they would “always require benevolent supervision”.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1919”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 232.

¹⁸⁶ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1929”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 951. During 1929, forty-one women and thirty-three children were removed to settlements, while three women and nine children were removed to mission stations.

¹⁸⁷ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 12.

In 1938, Bleakley discussed the Aboriginal population, dividing it into four types: primitive nomads, who were self-sufficient; those with a precarious existence in their own land; the detribalised and vagrant; and “crossbreeds”.¹⁸⁸ Previous government policy had been to protect each of the groups, although different outcomes were expected. It was hoped to ease the nomadic types into a transition to the “settled industrious life”; to help degraded and destitute Aboriginals to rehabilitate themselves; and to assist detribalised Aborigines to receive education and training in industrial pursuits with a view to encouraging self determination.¹⁸⁹ Under the guidance of Hanlon as Home Secretary, the Aboriginal Department co-operated with the State Children’s Department, particularly in the supervision of infant life protection, and more economical inspection of females in domestic service.¹⁹⁰ Other laws also focused on protection, including the moral protection of females, combating alcohol and drug use, and bringing “the low type of crossbreeds who are living in depraved conditions” under the control of the department.¹⁹¹ New legislation introduced during Hanlon’s term as Home Secretary was intended “to widen the powers for the proper

¹⁸⁸ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, 1938, p. 1, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁹ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, 1938, pp. 2-4, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁹⁰ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 1, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁹¹ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, 1938, pp. 2-4, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

control, discipline and productive development of Aboriginal Settlements and Missions.”¹⁹²

The general attitude of governments and some sections of the press towards Aboriginal people in Queensland at this time was reminiscent of attitudes towards the mentally “unfit”, and particularly mental defectives. It was believed that these groups of people would never be able to wholly maintain themselves, but would always be dependent on government beneficence.¹⁹³ Newspapers in this period, in Queensland and in other states, used similar language to describe Aborigines and those considered mentally inferior.¹⁹⁴ This was not significantly different from the situation in the nineteenth century, when terms used to describe Aboriginal people were similar to those applied to the mentally disturbed, and both were discussed in language resembling that used to discuss violent criminals.¹⁹⁵ The treatment of Aboriginal people – their removal, institutionalisation and segregation from the community – was in practice extremely similar to the treatment of mental defectives. Although there was a great deal of rhetoric at this time that stressed the humanitarian motives behind this legislation, and this was certainly one

¹⁹² Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 12, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁹³ Tony Austin has also argued that while the mental capacity of Aboriginal people was sometimes compared to children, as the twentieth century went on it was increasingly likened to that of the feeble-minded (“Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, *Aboriginal History*, 14, 1-2 (1990), pp. 109-10).

¹⁹⁴ For example, a series of articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald* during 1927 discussed the intellectual capacity of Aborigines in a patronising manner: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 May 1927, p. 9; 20 October 1927, p. 11.

¹⁹⁵ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 81.

reason for its introduction, there were other contributory factors. Beliefs that contact between the races was detrimental to both were widespread, and were based in part on the threat to racial purity and fitness that this contact was believed to represent.

“Contamination” – contact between the races and the “menace” of the “half-caste”

From the early 1900s, Queensland public and government discourse on Aboriginal people was concerned with the dangers of contact between the races. This partly revealed a general fear that such contact was inherently degenerative for both races. This idea was one of the motivations behind the Queensland government policy towards Aboriginal people in the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁹⁶ It also revealed a deep-seated fear of miscegenation, which was a major concern of international eugenics movements.¹⁹⁷ It was these beliefs that led to the policy of racial segregation advocated by governments in Queensland at this time. All the Chief Protectors of Aboriginals between 1900 and 1942 advocated such a policy. By the 1940s, policies of assimilation were

¹⁹⁶ This view was not confined to Queensland. See “The Aborigines: an ancient people: effects of civilisation”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April 1927, p. 10; “Aboriginals: ‘No finer people’: dangers of civilisation”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1927, p. 15.

¹⁹⁷ C. W. Saleeby stated that “miscegenation in general [was] a problem in eugenics” (*Parenthood and race culture*, p. xii). See also Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 246; Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi connection: eugenics, American racism and German National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 14, 21-2, 78, 98.

becoming more popular, although racial segregation continued in practice long after this time.¹⁹⁸

Debate in Queensland about that group of people termed half-castes constantly reiterated the menace to the white community that these people were believed to pose. Although this was not usually specifically framed in terms of a threat to the future of the race, this threat was implied. The language used about “half-castes” often had similarities with racist eugenic propaganda in other countries. The Eugenics Committee, for example, which was formed in the US in 1906, was partly formed “to emphasize the value of superior blood and the menace to society of inferior blood”.¹⁹⁹ This overtly eugenic rhetoric had many parallels in the language used about “half-castes” in Queensland. Tony Austin argues that by the late 1920s, there was a widespread eugenicist view that “half-castes” were to be identified with the “unfit”.²⁰⁰ Raymond Evans contends that “half-castes” represented a threat to the “alleged purity and racial excellence of a ‘White Australia’”, and that this perceived threat informed the government’s dealings with them more than any concern for their care.²⁰¹ Under the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, “half-castes” were generally regarded as Aboriginal people, but the law was complex and obscure, and in practice much of the treatment of those classified as such was different

¹⁹⁸ Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 528.

¹⁹⁹ Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office”, p. 232.

²⁰⁰ Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, p. 104.

²⁰¹ Evans, *Fighting words*, p. 132.

to that received by those deemed "full-bloods".²⁰² Concern over racial intermixing was to be solved by the segregation and strict control of Aboriginal people.

In 1887, the *Queenslander* published an article warning of the dangers of intermixing between Aboriginal people and white people, an issue which was prevalent in the nineteenth century.²⁰³ Despite severe restrictions introduced under the 1897 act, contact between the races was still an issue in Queensland in the early twentieth century. Attitudes towards those Aboriginal people with some white heritage were contradictory. Some believed that they should be always treated as Aboriginal, while others argued that they could be treated as white, as long as it could be proven that they did not associate with other Aboriginal people.

In 1901, the Reverend E. R. Gribble, the superintendent of Yarrabah Mission, wrote to Roth to request that a four year old boy, the son of a half-caste mother and a European father, be sent to a white orphanage.²⁰⁴ Gribble wrote that "To all intents and purposes he is a white child and should be sent to an orphanage and brought up as a white child."²⁰⁵ In 1903, Roth wrote to the Registrar-General about a

²⁰² Roth, Chief Protector of Aborigines to Under Secretary, Lands Department, 17 May 1904, in-letter 930 of 1904, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²⁰³ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 16 April 1887, p. 618. See Evans, "Harlots and helots", pp. 107-9; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, p. 202.

²⁰⁴ Reverend E. R. Gribble, Head of Anglican Mission to Aborigines, Yarrabah to Walter E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, 6 March 1901, in-letter 4506 of 1901, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²⁰⁵ Gribble to Roth, 6 March 1901, in-letter 4506 of 1901, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

“half-caste” woman with a “quadroon” child whose father had refused to admit paternity; as a consequence the woman had been told that she could not register her child’s birth.²⁰⁶ The woman, Nellie Kelly, had been willed some property, and Roth was anxious to assure her that her child would be legally able to inherit eventually. The Registrar-General, before he would reply to Roth’s query, wanted to know if the woman was “living a civilised life with white people or a roving life with the Blacks”, and whether or not the child was being raised apart from other Aboriginal people.²⁰⁷ When Roth replied that she was living with white people, and the child was being raised separately from other Aborigines, the Registrar-General agreed that the birth could be registered.²⁰⁸ As these two examples show, decisions about whether “half-castes” should be treated as Aboriginal or white rested to a large extent on their behaviour, particularly whether or not they associated with other Aboriginal people. This was no doubt due partly to issues of social control, but it is also reasonable to assume that this control was based in part on a desire to restrict the reproduction of Aboriginal, and particularly “half-caste”, people.

²⁰⁶ Roth, Northern Protector of Aboriginals to J. Hughes, Registrar-General, 8 November 1903, in-letter 1065 of 1903, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²⁰⁷ Hughes to Roth, Department of Public Lands, 18 November 1903, in-letter 2542 of 1903, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²⁰⁸ Hughes to Roth, 3 December 1903, in-letter 2542 of 1903; the birth was registered in December: Hughes to Roth, 22 December 1903, in-letter 2787 of 1903, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

Meston and Roth both favoured a system of reserves segregated strictly along racial lines. In 1901, Ernest Favenc wrote in the *Sydney Bulletin* that such a system should be established, with heavy penalties for white people found on the reserves without authorisation, and equally heavy penalties for black people who left without permission.²⁰⁹ Favenc argued that this would end the practice of white men “abducting” black women, and thus “prevent the growth of a half-caste population, an increasing curse in Australia.”²¹⁰ Although Favenc appeared to be discussing practical difficulties arising from contact between black and white, his fears were revealed to be more focused on the growth of “a half-caste population”. Roth was anxious to reply to Favenc, in order to point out that a system of reserves was about to be established in Queensland under direction of the Home Secretary, J. G. Foxton.²¹¹ Under this system, Aboriginal people would not be forcibly removed because the reserves would be established in their own areas. According to Roth, this would mean that their wishes would be considered, and they would be “treated (within certain limits) as free agents and as human beings.”²¹² Relations between black and white would be severely restricted on these reserves.

²⁰⁹ *Sydney Bulletin* (12 October 1901), p. 28, 14 October 1901, in-letter 16263 of 1901, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²¹⁰ *Sydney Bulletin* (12 October 1901), p. 28, 14 October 1901, in-letter 16263 of 1901, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²¹¹ Copy of Roth’s reply, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²¹² Copy of Roth’s reply, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

Fears about contact between Aboriginals and Europeans were based partly on social order and control, and partly on eugenic fears of miscegenation or contamination. Perhaps not surprisingly, the reports of various district protectors showed very little evidence of ideological opposition towards contact between white and black, but rather focused on practical objections. Opium was still considered to be the biggest problem. In 1901, S. Behan, the district protector for Normanton, advocated restrictions on marriage between Aboriginal women and Chinese men, but only because he believed that such unions would encourage other Aboriginal people to frequent opium dens.²¹³ Some reports mentioned marriages between Aboriginal women and men of other races with little or no comment.²¹⁴ In contrast, all the Chief Protectors were concerned with preventing the birth of "half-caste" children. In 1900, Roth wrote to the Native Mounted Police at Laura, requesting information "concerning the half-caste (especially female) children in your district".²¹⁵ This indicates the obsessive way in which the birth of "half-caste" children was documented, and also indicates that most fears were targeted at females.²¹⁶

²¹³ A/Sergeant S. Behan to Inspector's Office Normanton, Burke subdistrict, Report on the Aborigines Act and Opium Act, no date, in-letter 3/31-15 of 1901, A/29929, Queensland State Archives.

²¹⁴ A/Sergeant James E. Old, Georgetown sub-station, Burke subdistrict to Inspector of Police, Normanton, Report to the Protector of Aborigines, 3 April 1901, in-letter 4/3-14 of 1901, A/29929, Queensland State Archives.

²¹⁵ Roth, Northern Protector of Aboriginals, memorandum to Native Mounted Police, Laura, 7 September 1900, in-letter 76 of 1900, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²¹⁶ Huggins and Blake, "Protection or persecution?", p. 46; Ganter, "Living an immoral life", pp. 13-40; Goodall and Huggins, "Aboriginal women are everywhere", pp. 398-99.

In 1903, Roth expressed concern about Aboriginal girls becoming pregnant while in service, and stated that he did not approve of child labour, because these children, particularly the girls, were “prone to imitate” European vices.²¹⁷ Once this happened, these girls would become “semi-civilised” and “naturally refuse to return to camp life”.²¹⁸ This would leave them with no option but to turn to prostitution, thus constituting “a very difficult class to deal with”.²¹⁹ He also argued that with so many Aboriginal girls in service, it would be harder for Aboriginal men to find wives, which Roth believed would result in an increase of assaults on white women.²²⁰

Contrasting with attitudes towards those Aboriginal people with European heritage was the approach to those “half-castes” who had a parent of another “coloured” race.²²¹ These unions were uniformly discouraged. In 1902, Roth stated that he had acted on the recommendation of Inspector Meldrum in rejecting two applications for marriage permits, one between a Chinese man and an Aboriginal woman, and one between a Kanaka man and a “half-caste” woman; in the second case, he further recommended that the woman and her child be sent to a

²¹⁷ Roth, “Annual report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines for 1902”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1903), p. 460.

²¹⁸ Roth, Proposed remission of wages for Aboriginal children under 12, Department of Public Lands, p. 1, 23 May 1904, in-letter 16262 of 1904, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²¹⁹ Roth, Proposed remission of wages for Aboriginal children, p. 1, 23 May 1904, in-letter 16262 of 1904, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁰ Roth, Proposed remission of wages for Aboriginal children, p. 2, 23 May 1904, in-letter 16262 of 1904, A/58927, Queensland State Archives.

²²¹ Ganter, “Living an immoral life”, pp. 14-17.

mission station.²²² In 1903, Roth expressed anger at the report of a “half-caste” woman who had somehow been allowed to marry a man from Ceylon, but he was satisfied that such marriages were now within his control, as under the Amending Act of 1901 he was finally able to restrict the marriages of Aboriginal women to men of other races; he included a table showing the number of such unions that had been permitted.²²³

Roth described marriages between Kanaka men and Aboriginal women as an “evil”,²²⁴ and stated in another progress report that:

The evils to which the promiscuous marriage of aboriginal women with coloured aliens may lead is well exemplified in the conditions at Mossman of which I forwarded you a copy of the Police report.²²⁵

On other occasions, Roth displayed eugenic fears that the “half-caste population” in Queensland was growing. In his report for 1902, he expressed relief that marriages between Aboriginal women and men of other races were finally able to be restricted.²²⁶

²²² Roth, Progress report August 1902, Office of the Northern Protector of Aborigines, Cooktown to the Home Secretary, pp. 3-4, 2 September 1902, in-letter 14287 of 1902, A/44679, Queensland State Archives.

²²³ Roth, “Annual report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines for 1902”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1903), p. 463.

²²⁴ Roth, Progress report, Brisbane, October 1901, in-letter 11/13-24 of 1901, A/29929, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁵ Roth, Progress report, August 1901, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Cooktown to Home Secretary, September 1901, in-letter 14610 of 1901, A/44679, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁶ Roth, “Annual report”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1903), p. 463. It is unclear whether Roth was influenced by international commentary at this time, although it is certain that he took a keen interest in ethnography and anthropology, as evidenced by his communications with various academic departments (A. L. Kroeber, Secretary, Department of Anthropology, University of California to Roth, 5 October 1904, in-letter 10/5-2 of 1904; Memorandum from Roth, 29 July 1903, in-letter 7/29-75 of 1903; Franz Boaz, Department of Ethnology, American Museum of Natural History to Roth, 20 May 1903, in-letter 5/20-76 of 1903, A/29929; O. Mason, Acting Head Curator, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, United States

In 1910, the *Queenslander* published a long article on the mission at Yarrabah, focusing on the “half-caste” girls there. The article provided a detailed list of the racial heritage of the inmates of mission, thus displaying the contemporary concern with obsessive racial categorising.²²⁷ The newspaper also revealed an incidental example of current beliefs in fitness when it argued that two of the men were, for all intents and purposes, unmarriageable, “one being a deaf mute, and the other blind.”²²⁸ A statement that although Aboriginal girls had a remote chance of marrying a white man, Aboriginal boys had none of marrying a white woman, was followed by an analysis of the racial mix of marriages at Yarrabah. The author of the article was against the idea of “half-caste” girls leaving the mission to go into domestic service. He argued that to say that they should earn their own living

... because they have been refined and educated on the mission to a greater likeness to their white fathers who deserted them is the most perverted reason I have ever heard. To rant against the wickedness of girls who are “good-looking, well-grown”, and “appear to be quadroons” marrying the men of their own choice who will respect them, and make them honourable mothers appears to me to be neither more or less than sentimental hypocrisy.²²⁹

National Museum, Washington to Roth, 17 November 1903, in-letter 11/17-109 of 1903, A/44680, Queensland State Archives).

²²⁷ “Half-caste girls at Yarrabah”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 June 1910, p. 29. Earlier, the newspaper had praised marriage regulations in place at the mission (*Queenslander* (Brisbane), 30 May 1908, p. 14).

²²⁸ “Half-caste girls at Yarrabah”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 June 1910, p. 29.

²²⁹ “Half-caste girls at Yarrabah”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 June 1910, p. 29.

This article demonstrated both the continual classification and categorisation of the racial mix of marriages between Aboriginal people and people of other races, as well as the strong belief that these unions should not be allowed to take place. It also displayed the continuing interest in the surveillance and control of the reproduction of Aboriginal people, and particularly those designated as “half-castes”. The author of the article was obviously concerned about the sexual exploitation of young Aboriginal girls in domestic service.

As noted above, Bleakley placed an even greater emphasis on segregation of Europeans and Aboriginals than his predecessors. In 1914, soon after he was appointed as Chief Protector, he told the *Queenslander* that “half-castes” should be segregated on a reserve separate from other Aboriginal people.²³⁰ He stated in 1919 that the marriage of full-blood women to Europeans or Asiatics was “firmly discouraged.”²³¹ In his report for this year, he stated that the “fundamental principle of the aborigines betterment schemes brought forward last year was ‘complete segregation’”, achieved by the system of removal to reserves and mission stations, both of which were racially segregated.²³² He considered this the only possible way of improving the Aboriginal race. Bleakley continued:

²³⁰ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

²³¹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1919”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 232.

²³² Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 233.

The native is very susceptible to all the physical and moral ills of our civilisation, and it is only by complete separation of the two races that we can save him from hopeless contamination and eventual extinction, as well as safeguard the purity of our own blood.²³³

Thus, despite Bleakley's statements that segregation was intended to benefit Aboriginal people, he quickly revealed that eugenic fears of racial purity also informed the policy. Bleakley went on to state that about half the Aboriginal population of the state was estimated to be "half-caste".²³⁴ This meant that not only was the Aboriginal race "contaminated", it was an unavoidable conclusion that Europeans were also, a conclusion which Bleakley felt was a matter for "serious reflection".²³⁵ In concluding this section, Bleakley revealed how such eugenic fears of racial contamination informed the policy of segregation adhered to in Queensland during the early twentieth century. He stated that the only alternative to segregation was absorption by the "more numerous and more virile race", a solution that he viewed with "misgivings".²³⁶ Although the rhetoric surrounding legislation directed at Aboriginal people continually reiterated protection, Bleakley's statements that there were only two alternative solutions reveals different priorities. These two solutions, rather than being

²³³ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 233.

²³⁴ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 233.

²³⁵ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 233.

²³⁶ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1920), p. 233.

concerned with Aboriginal protection, were focused on “safeguarding” racial purity.

Further examples of attitudes towards half-caste Aboriginal people can be found in the views of Mrs Lance Rawson, published in the *Queenslander*. In 1920, she described a “half-caste” woman named Maggie as “a fine-looking girl, good tempered, and an excellent servant”.²³⁷ She continued that although she sometimes thought it “was a pity to see her in a blacks’ camp”, she concluded that, in her experience, “no matter how careful or complete the civilising influence the wild nature predominated, and they always returned to it.”²³⁸ Rawson substantiated this claim by stating that Maggie was an alcoholic, and “would never be sober” as long as she had access to alcohol.²³⁹ She further supported her arguments by claiming that Maggie, although she was passionately fond of her child, “had not the least idea of managing it”.²⁴⁰

Later in the same year, Rawson displayed even more strongly her attitudes towards “half-castes”. In this article, she argued that it was not the “full-blood” Aboriginal who was the real problem, for “he can provide for himself”.²⁴¹ Rather:

²³⁷ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1920, p. 5.

²³⁸ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1920, p. 5.

²³⁹ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1920, p. 5.

²⁴⁰ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1920, p. 5.

²⁴¹ “Making the best of it: Mrs. Lance Rawson’s reminiscences: the Aboriginals”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

It will always be a very difficult thing to know how to treat and provide for ... the half-caste, a far more serious, more far-reaching, menace to the white race of this and other countries. Fortunately there are not so very many of them ...²⁴²

This language, and the assumption that "half-castes" were unable to provide for themselves, recalls similar language used and assumptions made about mental defectives.²⁴³ Rawson continued that many outback stations in Queensland supported a camp of blacks. Although the camp was generally restricted to a certain distance from the house, these camps "were always a deadly menace, as was evidenced by the number of half-caste children in every camp."²⁴⁴ Rawson was contemptuous of the fathers of these children, stating that "the concentration camps, or whatever they are called, have been a great boon and protection, saving them from scandal and exposure."²⁴⁵ Despite her contempt for these men, it was the Aboriginal women whom she described as the "deadly menace".²⁴⁶ Rawson never clearly articulated the precise nature of this menace. It certainly encompassed concerns about social order, but there is also a strong indication that it was partly based on eugenic fears about miscegenation.²⁴⁷

²⁴² "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

²⁴³ Charles Mackellar identified camps of Aboriginal and half-caste women as one of the sources from which the "feeble-minded" emerged (Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness' in early twentieth-century New South Wales", p. 219).

²⁴⁴ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

²⁴⁵ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

²⁴⁶ "Making the best of it", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ Commentators usually suggested that their concern was for the wellbeing of "half-castes" themselves: "The tragedy of the half-caste", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 20 January 1917, p. 41.

These fears were also apparent in Bleakley's attitudes, expressed in his annual reports throughout the 1920s. He argued in 1925 that although the issue "of the future of the superior half-caste of European strain" was a matter "for anxious thought", it could not be solved by exempting these people from the act because "the blood is always an obstacle".²⁴⁸ In 1929, a Female Protection Branch was established to look after young Aboriginal, particularly "half-caste", women.²⁴⁹ This focused on protecting young women from sexual abuse in employment. While this protection was expressed in humanitarian terms, it was also concerned with preventing the birth of more "half-caste" children.²⁵⁰ Perhaps not coincidentally, the official census taken by the Aboriginal department in this year showed an increase in "full-bloods" and a decrease in "half-castes".²⁵¹ Bleakley argued that this was due to inconsistencies in enumeration. Later in the report, he elaborated, attributing the anomaly to the inconsistent recording of darker coloured "half-castes" as "full-bloods".²⁵² He did state, however, that it "may be regarded as some evidence of the effectiveness of the department's efforts to check miscegenation that the increase in the number of half-castes, if any, has been very small."²⁵³ Certificates of exemption were granted to "half-

²⁴⁸ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department – information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December 1924", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1092.

²⁴⁹ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1929", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 951.

²⁵⁰ Blake, "Deported ... At the sweet will of the government", p. 53.

²⁵¹ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 947.

²⁵² Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 951.

²⁵³ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 951.

castes" only after strict examination, and yet even so most of them proved unworthy of the "privilege", since most did not maintain a distance from Aboriginal camps.²⁵⁴ "Half-caste" mothers received a maternity allowance, provided the father was European.²⁵⁵ Bleakley stated that it "was at times difficult to make these poor women understand why the cross-breed of Asiatic strain was not eligible for the allowance, when their European half-caste friends received it."²⁵⁶

Bleakley was concerned with controlling the behaviour of Aboriginal people as well as with issues of racial fitness and racial purity. He stated more than once that the Aboriginal population could have a debilitating effect on the white race. In 1931, in *The half-caste Aborigines of North and Central Australia*, Bleakley expressed his regret that the "best type" of foster mothers would not take "half-caste" children, "and their natural precocity would make moral control difficult if allowed free contact with less desirable elements of white communities", a statement that was reminiscent of similar moral fears about mental "defectives".²⁵⁷ In this work, he also advocated every attempt to prevent "the breeding of half-castes", although by this stage he was prepared to accept that those "with [a] preponderance of white blood" should be educated in European

²⁵⁴ See Huggins and Huggins, *Auntie Rita*, for an example of the process of gaining an exemption from the act (pp. 43-5).

²⁵⁵ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 951. There were eighty-eight cases in 1929.

²⁵⁶ Bleakley, "Aboriginal Department", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 951.

²⁵⁷ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 8.

institutions from an early age, in order to facilitate their absorption into the white population after vocational training.²⁵⁸ He argued that these children “should be rescued from the aboriginal atmosphere as early as possible.”²⁵⁹ For the others, Bleakley stated that they would “have the greatest prospect of happiness” as isolated “members of a protected and civilised aboriginal community”.²⁶⁰ Once again, although he claimed that he was concerned with the best interests of Aboriginal people, other motivations were revealed when he stated that this solution would be the best “from the point of view of race purity”.²⁶¹ His statements also illustrated the complex interaction between environmental and hereditarian beliefs about race. It was believed that Aboriginal people with a certain amount of “white blood” could be assimilated into white society, but only if they were removed from an environment where they had contact with other Aboriginal people.

During the early 1930s, there was an increase in anxieties about the “half-caste” population of Queensland.²⁶² Under a 1930 amendment to

²⁵⁸ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 4.

²⁵⁹ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 4.

²⁶⁰ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 11.

²⁶¹ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 11.

²⁶² Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 193. Kidd states that discussion of Aboriginal affairs, particularly discussion on “half-castes”, was pronounced in Australia during the 1930s (*The way we civilise*, pp. 150-51); see also Rowley, *Outcasts in white Australia*, p. 16. In 1937, a national conference on Aboriginal welfare was held in Canberra (Aboriginal welfare – initial conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal authorities, held at Canberra, 21st to 23rd April, 1937), at which the issue of “half-castes” was prominent (see especially pp. 10, 18, 20-1). As noted in previous chapters, there was an international interest in issues related to racial fitness during the early 1930s: Michael Burleigh, *Ethics and extermination: reflections on Nazi genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 115-17; Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark”, pp. 44-6; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics*

the *Election Act* of 1915, a sizable number of "half-caste" Aboriginal people were disenfranchised.²⁶³ In February 1930, just months before the amendment was passed, Bleakley wrote to the Principal Electoral Officer arguing that "half-castes" who habitually associated with Aboriginals were subject to the authority of the department, and thus should not be entitled to vote.²⁶⁴ The electoral officer replied that the status of "half-castes" under the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* did not affect their entitlement to vote under the *Election Act*.²⁶⁵ In 1934, Bleakley told Hanlon that the majority of "half-castes" subject to the control of the department had "no desire to exercise the franchise and in most cases could not intelligently do so if given the privilege."²⁶⁶ Almost all "half-caste" Aboriginal people subject to departmental control had their names removed from electoral registers during 1930 and 1931.²⁶⁷ This issue occasioned a great deal of continuing debate.²⁶⁸ It is also interesting to note that these discussions

and human failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4, 54.

²⁶³ *An act to amend the Election Acts, 1915 to 1925*, 21 Geo. V no. 39: s. 8 amended s. 11 of the original act (which prohibited any "aboriginal native" of Australia from voting) to include any person defined as a "half-caste" and subject to the control of the department. See also Deputy Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Under Secretary, Home Department, 4 March 1935, in-letter 983 of 1935; Officer of Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, circular to all Protectors and Superintendents, 12 January 1931, in-letter not provided, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

²⁶⁴ Bleakley to Principal Electoral Registrar, 3 February 1930, in-letter 4274 of 1929, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

²⁶⁵ Principal Electoral Officer to Bleakley, 12 February 1930, in-letter 1033 of 1930, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

²⁶⁶ Bleakley, to Gall, Under Secretary Home Department, 13 February 1934, p. 2, in-letter 421 of 1934, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

²⁶⁷ Office of Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, circular to all protectors and superintendents, 22 March 1935, in-letter 1395 of 1935, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

²⁶⁸ Office of Director of Native Affairs, circular to all superintendents of settlements, mission stations and protectors of Aboriginals, 5 June 1940, in-letter not provided, Queensland State Archives.

occurred at the same time as those over the sterilisation of mental “defectives”. Although the Home Department was responsible for both these areas of policy, there is no evidence that these debates overlapped.

In 1933, Bleakley wrote that there had been a great deal of public interest during the previous year in “the important question of the future of the half-caste”, prompted by the proposal in another state that the marriage of “half-caste” women to European men should be encouraged, “in order to breed out the aboriginal strain”.²⁶⁹ Although Bleakley did not name the author of this proposal, he was clearly referring to Cecil Cook, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory. In this year, Cook had put forward a proposal to implement a policy of biological absorption of Aboriginal “blood” in the Northern Territory, or, as he put it, to “breed out the colour”.²⁷⁰ Although Bleakley disapproved of this idea himself, as indicated by his report for 1929, he chose to attack it indirectly. He argued that prominent scientists had opposed the suggestion on two grounds. The first was that the only Europeans willing to marry “half-castes” would be of “a low type”, which does not appear to be a scientific argument.²⁷¹ The second was that scientists claimed that

²⁶⁹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1933”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 885.

²⁷⁰ Cook’s plan did not receive popular support in Australia. See Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, pp. 112-13; Rowena MacDonald, *Between two worlds: the Commonwealth government and the removal of Aboriginal children of part descent in the Northern Territory: an Australian Archives exhibition* (Alice Springs: IAD Press, 1995), p. 20; McGregor, *Imagines destinies*, pp. 161-63 on Cook’s proposal, and p. 174 for opposition; McGregor contends that this opposition was based on concepts of racial purity.

²⁷¹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 885.

“the evils of hereditary transmission would always be a menace to the happiness of such unions.”²⁷² Bleakley argued that such views supported the department’s policy of discouraging miscegenation. He further argued that the increase in “half-caste” numbers was generally not attributable to miscegenation anyway, but rather to the fact that “half-castes” tended to marry other Aboriginal people, thus making their children “half-caste” also.²⁷³

Bleakley did believe that the future of the “half-caste” was a very important issue.²⁷⁴ Cook’s suggestion was out of the question because it would only result in “injustice to [them] and injury to the white race”.²⁷⁵ Once again, Bleakley saw only two solutions to the “half-caste problem”: segregation or reabsorption. He displayed an interesting mix of environmental and hereditarian ideas when he argued that, although their biggest disadvantage was their environment (by which he meant the environment of the camps and the society of other Aboriginal people, not the racist white society that refused to treat them as equals), very few had the capacity to rise above it. Although he did not explicitly refer to heredity, he had done so earlier, and seemed to indicate by his use of the word “capacity” a belief in innate ability. Bleakley concluded that in

²⁷² Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 885.

²⁷³ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 885.

²⁷⁴ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 885.

²⁷⁵ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 885.

those rare cases in which innate ability was present, there was the possibility of being granted an exemption to the act.²⁷⁶

In the following year, Gall sent the memorandum to Governor Wilson in which he advocated the sterilisation of “half-castes”.²⁷⁷ Despite obvious parallels with legislation in Germany at this time, there was no explicit indication that either Gall or Wilson recognised any similarity.²⁷⁸ The memorandum was prompted by debate about a further amending act to the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*. After describing the provisions of the act, Gall turned to the question of the future of Aboriginal people in Queensland. He stated that it had to be admitted that the “full-blood” Aboriginal people were members “of an inferior race, which in the onward march of civilization must eventually succumb to the white race.”²⁷⁹ This statement reflects the persistence of the “doomed race” theory, but is particularly surprising in view of a great deal of evidence to the contrary at this stage, most coming from Gall’s own department.²⁸⁰ Gall also argued that it would be “undesirable” to

²⁷⁶ In 1933, forty-two people applied for an exemption, and eight were granted one.

²⁷⁷ W. J. Gall to Governor Leslie Wilson, memorandum, Aboriginal Protection Acts Queensland, no date, in-letter not provided, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁷⁸ See Konrad Kwiet and Olaf Reinhardt, “A ‘Nazi’ assessment of Australian racial policy from 1935”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 34, 3 (1989), pp. 388-405, for a discussion of the German government’s interest in and approval of Australian policy towards Aboriginal people at this time.

²⁷⁹ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁰ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December 1924”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1095; Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December 1929”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 947; Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December 1933”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 879.

have “half-castes” living “side by side with a white population”.²⁸¹ Gall stated that as more Aboriginal lands were “settled” by whites, problems would become more obvious, and then asked, for the first time “Are they [Aboriginal people] to earn their own living or be a permanent charge on the State?”²⁸²

He argued that “quadroons” were negligible in number, and had a chance of being absorbed by marriage into the white population.²⁸³ “Full” Aboriginals would soon “have to give way to the whites”, when the lands they occupied were wanted for “settlement”.²⁸⁴ Gall felt, however, that by the time this occurred, these Aboriginal people would “either have disappeared through sickness spread by the whites” or been taken to reserves or missions.²⁸⁵ His concern, therefore, was with “half-castes”, as it was “safe to assume that there will be a good many more half-castes” before whites had entirely settled the state.²⁸⁶ Gall did not approve of either of the usual suggested solutions to this “problem”: allow “half-castes” to marry full Aboriginals, or allow them to marry whites; he preferred the latter.²⁸⁷ His objection to the first was that “half-castes” did not want to marry “full bloods”, and vice versa: “the full blood, unconsciously perhaps, has some regard for racial purity, and often

²⁸¹ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸² Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸³ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁴ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁵ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁶ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁷ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives. This was in contrast to Bleakley’s views on the subject, stated in *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 10.

looks upon the half-caste with contempt.”²⁸⁸ He continued that “If, however, such marriages took place the result could only be the breeding up of an inferior race.”²⁸⁹ His objection to the second was that there were not likely to be many marriages between “whites” and “half-castes”, “and such as did take place would only be with inferior whites and the result again would be the breeding of an inferior people.”²⁹⁰ The marriage of “half-castes” to other “half-castes” would also produce an inferior race.

At this point, Gall asked again, rhetorically, whether Aboriginal people, and specifically “half-castes”, would be able to earn their own living or would become a permanent charge on the state.²⁹¹ He believed that they would be allowed to earn their own living if they were not competing with white workers. He went on, however, to state that:

In my opinion half-castes and all blacks will become a permanent charge on the State to the extent to which the different Settlements and Missions are short of being self-supporting.²⁹²

Gall believed that mainland Aboriginal people would drift into missions and become a drain on revenue.²⁹³ It was thus that he came to the conclusion that the government would “sooner or later ... have seriously to consider the question of sterilization of the half-caste.”²⁹⁴ Wilson

²⁸⁸ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁹ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹⁰ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹¹ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹² Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 3, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹³ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 5, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹⁴ Gall to Wilson, memorandum, p. 6, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

expressed gratitude for Gall's memorandum.²⁹⁵ He described the "problem" of "half-castes" as "a most difficult question", to which it was almost impossible to find a solution, "except the one mentioned in the last paragraph of your memorandum, and I cannot believe that any Government would be brave enough to legislate in that direction."²⁹⁶ Wilson appeared to prefer to concentrate on practical measures, arguing that missions could be made to be more self-supporting than they were, by teaching the children trades, which would be "much more useful" than learning history.²⁹⁷

In 1934, the definition of "half-caste" under the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* was broadened.²⁹⁸ This category now encompassed the children of one Aboriginal or two "half-caste" parents; the grandchild of one Aboriginal or two "half-caste" grandparents, if the person lived or habitually associated with Aboriginal people; and, finally:

Any person one of whose parents is or was an aboriginal and any child under 21 years of age of such a person. The term wherever it occurs in this Act ... [excluding those exempted from the act] be construed to include any person of aboriginal or Pacific Island extraction, resident within the State of Queensland, who is living with or as an aboriginal or habitually associates with aboriginals or in the opinion of the Chief Protector is in need of control or protection of this Act. ²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ Wilson to Gall, p. 1, 13 August 1934, in-letter not provided (marked personal), A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹⁶ Wilson to Gall, p. 1, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹⁷ Wilson to Gall, p. 2, A/8725, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹⁸ Previously the definition of "half-caste" had been simply "any person being the offspring of an aboriginal mother and other than an aboriginal father" (*Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1897, 61 Vic. no. 17, s. 3).

²⁹⁹ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, s. 2 (b).

This new definition considerably extended the range of people subject to the act, and hence the control of the department.³⁰⁰ Bleakley stated approvingly in his report for 1934 that this would provide for the care “of all cross-breed elements” in Queensland.³⁰¹ The government maintained control over those “half-castes” who, in the opinion of the minister, did not have “sufficient intelligence to manage [their] own affairs”.³⁰² This clause gave the minister, and, by extension, the Chief Protector, great discretion to interfere in the lives of “half-castes”. The language used was reminiscent of that used to describe the mentally “defective” as being unable compete on equal terms with their peers.³⁰³

As a result of the 1934 amending act, many Aboriginal people became subject to the jurisdiction of the department for the first time in the

³⁰⁰ This amending act also contained provisions for the indefinite detention of Aboriginals deemed “uncontrollables” under the act, a clause which focused on Aboriginal men convicted of the sexual assault of white women (*Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, s. 21). The amendment, and this clause in particular, has been discussed by Evans, *Fighting words*, pp. 156-59; and Blake, “Deported ... At the sweet will of the government”, p. 57. See also *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (20 October 1934), pp. 1556-57; Hanlon described such men as a “menace to society” (1556). See Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, pp. 251-55, for a discussion of the creation of the delinquent as an individual separate from acts of criminality.

³⁰¹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department – information contained in report for the year ended 31st December 1934”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 976. This had the added effect of disenfranchising a new group of people. Under the provision of the amendment to the *Election Act*, all those people newly defined as “half-castes” under the control of the department were no longer entitled to vote (Office of Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, circular to all Protectors and Superintendents, 22 March 1935, in-letter 1395 of 1935, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives).

³⁰² *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, s. 5 (d).

³⁰³ For an example of such a definition see “Environment and heredity”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 May 1920, p. 6.

1930s.³⁰⁴ In his annual report for 1934, Bleakley stated that the passing of the amendment to the *Aboriginals Protection Acts* was the most important administrative act of the year.³⁰⁵ He claimed that the amendment would provide

... for greater control and supervision over the health and social conditions of the half-castes, the provision of a greater measure of protection for females, and extended supervision over the health conditions of coloured people.³⁰⁶

A new clause of the amending act also set out penalties for sexual offences against Aboriginal women by non-Aboriginal men.³⁰⁷ Bleakley argued that this would “result in appreciably reducing the number of births of illegitimate half-caste and quadroon children.”³⁰⁸ The department intended to take action against every offender under this provision. This revealed a widespread obsession with preventing an increase in the “half-caste” population of the state. This was also seen in the statement by Hanlon that the amending act would check the “alarming” rise in the birth-rate of “half-castes” in Queensland.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁴ Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 193.

³⁰⁵ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 976.

³⁰⁶ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 976. The emphasis on control was also apparent in Bleakley’s correspondence with the government at this time (Deputy Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Under Secretary, Home Department, 4 March 1935, in-letter 983 of 1935, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives); and in Hanlon’s statements in introducing the bill into parliament (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (20 November 1934), p. 1554.

³⁰⁷ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, s. 9.

³⁰⁸ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 976.

³⁰⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (20 November 1934), p. 1555.

Power was also given to protectors to order Aborigines suspected of having venereal disease to submit to medical examinations, and to constrain those found to be infected to undergo medical treatment.³¹⁰ Bleakley stated that the incidence of infectious diseases “amongst the cross-breed elements of the coloured population, particularly, has always been cause for considerable concern.”³¹¹ He claimed that this provision was intended to provide the protection to which Aborigines were entitled by their circumstances and status, and no doubt this was partly true.³¹² In order to gain exemption from the act, “cross breeds” had to show that they had the capability to manage their own affairs, and also obtain a medical certificate from the government showing that they did not suffer from venereal disease.³¹³ A government document stated that the living conditions of Aboriginal people were a cause for concern.³¹⁴ It continued that:

... the principal purpose of the extension of the application of the Act to include all crossbreeds of aboriginal or Pacific island extraction is to enable some supervision and control to be exercised over their conditions of living and associations in the interests of health and morality.³¹⁵

³¹⁰ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, ss. 12-14.

³¹¹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 976. See also *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (24 October 1934), pp. 930-31, where concerns about the incidence of venereal disease among Aboriginal women were raised. This debate also revealed prevailing racial attitudes, as J. A. C. Kenny, the member for Cook, argued that white nurses should not have to attend to Aboriginal women suffering from venereal disease.

³¹² Venereal disease was a significant problem in Aboriginal communities. Kidd states that treatment was “arbitrary and erratic” (*The way we civilise*, pp. 98-9). See also Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 272.

³¹³ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 982.

³¹⁴ POL9/H1, p. 1, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁵ POL9/H1, p. 1, Queensland State Archives.

The government believed that many Aboriginal people did not possess “sufficient intelligence” to seek treatment for contagious diseases, and blamed the spread of such diseases on the fact that many Aboriginal men worked all over the state.³¹⁶ In order to secure exemption from the jurisdiction of the act, an Aboriginal person had to produce a medical certificate stating that they were free from “contagious disease”.³¹⁷ The introduction of such a clause was similar to the goals of many eugenics organisations.³¹⁸

Bleakley stated that there had been an increase in numbers of “half-castes” in the state during 1934.³¹⁹ He claimed, however, that this was due to inaccuracies in recording. Many more people were now covered by the act, due to the amendment. Even Bleakley considered that the amendment brought too many Aboriginal people under the control of the department, stating that it was not intended that the “better type half-caste” should be “indiscriminately treated as a full-blood aboriginal.”³²⁰ Bleakley recommended that “half-castes” be segregated from both the

³¹⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (20 November 1934), p. 1555. This attitude was similar to that of the medical profession in America towards the incidence of venereal disease among the African American population: it was believed that syphilis was particularly associated with this group, that it was linked to their uncontrolled sexual behaviour, and that these people were difficult to treat because they refused to take the disease seriously (James H. Jones, *Bad blood: the Tuskegee syphilis experiment* 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1993), pp. 22-9).

³¹⁷ *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V no. 38, ss. 12-13; POL9/H1, p. 2, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁸ “Eugenics and degeneration”, *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4; C. W. Saleeby, *The methods of race regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911), p. 60.

³¹⁹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 982.

³²⁰ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 982. See also Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 194.

Aboriginal and European communities, on “self-contained communities under benevolent supervision”, where they could “develop into useful members of society”.³²¹ The government also stressed the importance of the amending act in providing protection for Aboriginal people, both from the exploitation of the white race, and from themselves.³²²

In 1938, when Bleakley discussed the Aboriginal population, he divided it into four types.³²³ One of these “types”, the “detribalised and vagrant” element, he described as a menace to the health and morals of the community, a statement that he reiterated at various times during the remainder of his tenure.³²⁴ The last of these was “crossbreeds”.³²⁵ This final category was further sub-divided into four sub-categories: those with a preponderance of “Aboriginal blood” and entirely “Aboriginal leanings”; those crossed with lower types of alien races, such as Pacific Islanders, Malays and Africans; those crossed with Europeans or “higher Asiatic types”; and the quadroon or octoroon with a preponderance of European blood.³²⁶ The previous policy had been to help superior crossbreeds to overcome their social handicaps, and provide education

³²¹ Bleakley, “Aboriginal Department”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 982.

³²² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (22 November 1934), p. 1687.

³²³ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, 1938, p. 1, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³²⁴ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, p. 1, A/58915; Motion by Queensland representative that a uniform policy and legislation should be adopted for Aboriginal protection, p. 1, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58913, Queensland State Archives.

³²⁵ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, p. 1, A/58915.

³²⁶ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, p. 1, A/58915.

and training for them to take their place in the white community.³²⁷ This obsession with classification indicated the extent of the control that the Queensland government attempted to maintain over the lives and reproduction of Queensland Aborigines.³²⁸ The belief that Aboriginal people were “contaminated” by contact with white civilisation also persisted.³²⁹

In 1939, under the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act*, the title of the office of the Protector of Aboriginals was changed to Native Affairs.³³⁰ The rhetoric surrounding this act was significantly different to that of the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts* of 1897 to 1934, with Hanlon stating in parliament that it was aimed at the preservation of the race, than merely protecting Aboriginal people.³³¹ G. Nicklin, the leader of the opposition, argued that it was both possible and desirable to maintain and perhaps even increase the Aboriginal population, while Edmund Maher, also an opposition member, contended that the Aboriginal race had been underrated.³³² Interestingly, there appears to have been some support for the biological absorption of

³²⁷ Aboriginal Protection in Queensland, pp. 2-4, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³²⁸ That social control, and not simply humanitarianism, was a motive was suggested by the statement that “detribalised” Aborigines were to be kept on “semi-penitentiary settlements” which would provide for their “control, discipline, relief, medical treatment and protection”, thus revealing complex motivations (Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 3, A/58915, Queensland State Archives).

³²⁹ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 3, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁰ Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 176.

³³¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), p. 453.

³³² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), pp. 454, 455.

“half-caste” Aboriginal people into white society at this time. Maher argued that it was a pity that “half-castes” should be “forced down to the level of the aboriginal”, and advocated intermarriage with whites as a solution, although he knew there would be strong opinion against it.³³³

Maher was not alone in these opinions. C. G. Jesson discussed the “tragedy” of children who were “almost” white being forced to associated with black children, suggesting that the former should be adopted by white families and absorbed into the community.³³⁴ J. B. Edwards and H. H. Collins also supported this idea.³³⁵ Nevertheless, the debate revealed that older ideas were still present. Nicklin stated that the segregation of “full-blood” Aboriginal people for their own protection should continue.³³⁶ William Dart declared that he did not want “half-castes” to have too much freedom, as they were a “danger to the population”.³³⁷ He also argued against intermarriage, stating that it was important to “keep the white race white”.³³⁸ H. M. Russell called “half-castes” an evil, and also revealed evidence of a particularly longstanding belief, in his contention that “full-blood” Aboriginals were “doomed”.³³⁹

³³³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), p. 456.

³³⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), p. 457.

³³⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), pp. 458-59.

³³⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (20 September 1939), p. 488.

³³⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), p. 456.

³³⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (19 September 1939), p. 456.

³³⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 174 (20 September 1939), p. 495. Russell was the leader of the United Australia Party.

Despite the change in appellation, the Department of Native Affairs continued to display a strong interest in cataloguing and categorising the Aboriginal population of the state.³⁴⁰ Under the 1939 act, the term “half-castes” had been replaced with “half-bloods”, but regardless of terminology, the group of people so designated continued to be identified as a cause for concern.³⁴¹ Under the 1939 amendment act, those people who were deemed to have less than fifty percent “Aboriginal blood”, and who did not live or “habitually associate” with “full-bloods” were exempt from the act.³⁴² The new provision reflected a growing belief that “half-castes” had the capability to integrate into white society.³⁴³ At the same time, the discussion of specific percentages of “blood” indicates a continuing obsession with classification and categorisation of Aboriginal people for purposes of control.³⁴⁴ Also, those Aboriginal people with some European blood were still expected to segregate themselves from other Aboriginal people.³⁴⁵

In this year, Bleakley, the Director of Native Affairs, told Hanlon, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, that many “half-castes” were

³⁴⁰ Bleakley, “Report of the Director of Native Affairs for 1939”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* (1940), p. 1077.

³⁴¹ Bleakley, “Report”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* (1940), p. 1078.

³⁴² *An act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the preservation and protection of Aborigines, and for other purposes* (to be cited as the *Aborigines Preservation and Protection Act of 1939*), 3 Geo. VI no. 6, s. 5(3). Bleakley stated that it was too soon to judge the results of this new provision (“Report”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* (1940), p. 1078).

³⁴³ Kidd, *The way we civilise*, pp. 145-46.

³⁴⁴ During the 1940s, the department had a file on “Almost white girls on settlements” (Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 177).

³⁴⁵ Haebich, *Broken circles*, p. 176; Huggins and Huggins, *Auntie Rita*, pp.43-5.

exempted from the control of the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act* of 1939.³⁴⁶ Bleakley stated that:

... only a percentage of such cross-breeds can maintain the civilized standard, and the remainder drift back to practically camp conditions. As they cannot fairly be dragged back to aboriginal associations, even though the living conditions on the reserves are often vastly superior to those of these nondescript camps, it appears to be the Department's responsibility to afford them assistance to achieve the better living standards, not only for humanitarian reasons, but in the interests of the health of the community generally.³⁴⁷

He had previously argued that the conditions of camps was of "vital interest" to local residents employing Aboriginal people as domestics, "because of the danger to health."³⁴⁸ He argued that most people still felt that "half-castes" or "cross-breeds" were the responsibility of the Department of Native Affairs.³⁴⁹ The concerns displayed in this report were a combination of hygienic and eugenic fears. "Half-caste" people were identified as a source of danger to the health of the community, but the statement that very few "cross-breeds" could maintain a civilised standard of life without assistance appeared to be referring to the supposedly defective heredity of these people.

³⁴⁶ Bleakley to the Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 3 July 1940, in-letter 1009 of 1940, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁴⁷ Bleakley to Department of Health and Home Affairs, 3 July 1940, in-letter 1009 of 1940, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁴⁸ Bleakley to Department of Health and Home Affairs, 3 July 1940, in-letter 1009 of 1940, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁴⁹ Bleakley to Department of Health and Home Affairs, 3 July 1940, in-letter 1009 of 1940, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

A year later, similar concerns were in evidence when the parliamentarian Randolph Bedford expressed anxiety about a “half-caste problem” at Cunnamulla station.³⁵⁰ Bedford wrote to Hanlon, stating that he had been asked by a fellow MP, Noyes, who had just returned from the district, to represent to the department the “serious menace” caused by “half-castes” there.³⁵¹ Bedford claimed that Noyes had seen hundreds of “half-castes”, “loafing about the streets”, not working and insulting white women.³⁵² The Inspector of Police at Cunnamulla, however, stated that the “half-caste” population of the town was not a problem, and that there was no record of any insults to white women.³⁵³ Bedford’s concerns were primarily about social order and control, rather than focusing on eugenic fears about miscegenation.³⁵⁴ Nevertheless, his views indicate that the idea that a “half-caste” population, identified separately from other Aboriginal people, represented a “menace” to the health and safety of the community continued into the 1940s. These concerns were less important by the 1940s, however, and particularly after 1945.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁰ Randolph Bedford, MLA to E. M. Hanlon, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 12 February 1941, in-letter 1170 of 1941, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁵¹ Bedford to Hanlon, 12 February 1941, in-letter 1170 of 1941, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁵² Bedford to Hanlon, 12 February 1941, in-letter 1170 of 1941, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁵³ Inspector of Police, Charleville Police District, Cunnamulla Station to Health and Home Affairs Department, Brisbane, 28 February 1941, in-letter 1617 of 1941, A/4193, Queensland State Archives.

³⁵⁴ There is evidence that Bedford was interested in this issue as early as 1904: Randolph Bedford, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 15 July 1904, in-letter 7/15-26A of 1904; Randolph Bedford, Melbourne to Undersecretary, Department of Lands, 27 August 1904, in-letter 8/27-26B of 1904, A/29929, Queensland State Archives.

³⁵⁵ Internationally, racial determinist ideas were rapidly losing scientific credibility by this time: Banton, *Racial theories*, pp. 95-7; Barkan, *The retreat of scientific racism*, pp. 1-2; Chase, *The legacy of Malthus*, pp. 342-61; Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, pp. 140-41.

“Useful and capable men and women”: education and training

The similarity in attitudes towards Aboriginal people and mental defectives has already been noted. This similarity was also evident in discussions about the employment, education and training of these two groups of people. In both cases, the value of the people was tied to their economic productiveness. This was commonplace at the time for many groups.³⁵⁶ Rosalind Kidd argues that in nineteenth-century reformatory schools, industrial training was emphasised as a path to independence, and therefore inmates were apprenticed out and the government controlled employment and wages until workers reached the age of twenty-one.³⁵⁷ Discussions about the education and training of Aboriginal people, as with many other groups, focused on vocational training aimed at making them useful, and as self-supporting as possible.³⁵⁸ In contrast to other groups, however, there were strict limits on the expectations about Aboriginal achievement. Unlike other areas of policy relating to Aboriginal people, a belief that education and training could improve the productiveness of this group changed very little between 1900 and 1950.

³⁵⁶ Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, pp. 51-3, and *Discipline and punish*, pp. 24-6.

³⁵⁷ Kidd, *The way we civilise*, p. 20.

³⁵⁸ Paisley, *Loving protection?*, pp. 55-6; Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 188.

One of the main reasons that Torres Strait Islanders were generally seen as slightly more worthy of respect in Queensland at this time was that they were believed to be more economically productive than mainland Aboriginals, and thus less of a drain on government resources. In 1900, the *Brisbane Courier* published a letter by John Douglas.³⁵⁹ Douglas stated that although he did not want to encourage unrealistic expectations of “what is called the civilisation of these people”, he had no doubt

... that the habits of order and obedience taught at school, as well as the mental training imparted, will make them industrially more useful and capable men and women. This is a great consideration, for there is a reasonable hope that we may be able to perpetuate a race in the islands which will be suitable for the work of our maritime industries.³⁶⁰

Thus, their worth was in direct proportion to their usefulness, and their education was focused on training them to work.³⁶¹ Torres Strait Islanders were described in one later government document as “a race of people who under departmental guidance have made themselves practically self-supporting”.³⁶² The only cost to the government was for supervisory staff and education. Rhetoric about Aboriginal education

³⁵⁹ Douglas was a former premier of Queensland, and the Government Resident and Magistrate on Thursday Island from 1885 to 1904 (Williamson, *Schooling the Torres Strait Islanders*, p. 11).

³⁶⁰ “Torres Straits Aboriginals”, *Brisbane Courier*, 1 August 1900, p. 7.

³⁶¹ In a 1904 letter, Andrew Cairns, a teacher at Mabuiag Island School, argued that it would be worth educating children on the island “if they would only put the education they get to some good use”: Andrew S. Cairns, Mabuiag Island School to Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, Brisbane, 30 September 1904, in-letter 31618 of 1904, A/58907, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶² Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 1, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

also focused on the idea that it would raise their level of “civilisation”.³⁶³ It was common at this time for the economic exploitation of certain races by European colonisers to be equated with the spread of civilisation.³⁶⁴

Education on reserves and missions was focused on manual and vocational training. Meston argued that Aboriginal settlements and reserves should have a local government adapted to the Aboriginal character, and schools for teaching plain reading, writing and singing.³⁶⁵ The *Brisbane Courier* thought that the most important development in managing mission stations had been the establishment under the auspices of Foxton, the Home Secretary, of a provisional school system, where the government was attempting “to do for these black children what is done for the white in provisional schools”.³⁶⁶

There is evidence that education was only considered important for those Aboriginal people who were not economically productive. In 1903, the Normanton district protector, Percy Galbraith, asked Roth in his annual report whether Aboriginal children in employment were subject to the

³⁶³ A newspaper clipping from the *Torres Strait Pilot*, 10 December 1904, stated that the aim of education was to place Torres Strait Islanders “on a higher level of civilisation” (in A/58910, in-letter not provided, Queensland State Archives). See also Rowley, *The destruction of Aboriginal society*, pp. 86-107.

³⁶⁴ N. A. Loos, “The pragmatic racism of the frontier”, in Reynolds, *Race relations in north Queensland*, p. 283; Rowley, *The destruction of Aboriginal society*, pp. 85-107.

³⁶⁵ Extract from Queensland Aboriginals: proposed system for the improvement and preservation, A/58909, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶⁶ “The northern Aboriginals”, *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4. Provisional schools were established in 1869 to provide education to areas of small population (Hector Holthouse, *Looking back: 150 years of Queensland schools* (Brisbane: Department of Education, Queensland, 1975), p. 16; “Provisional schools”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 23 May 1908, p. 34).

Education Act of 1875, which stipulated that children between certain ages had to attend school.³⁶⁷ Galbraith stated that he insisted on a child attending school before granting a permit, but it seems likely that many other district protectors did not, and the government never insisted on it.³⁶⁸ In 1904, Chief Protector Howard wrote that:

Except where already in service under proper agreement, all full-blooded and half-caste children, especially the girls are gradually being drafted into the mission stations, on the authority of the Minister, or on the order of the local magistrates to the (mission) reformatories, every child of an aboriginal woman being a "neglected" child under the Reformatories Act.³⁶⁹

Although Aboriginal children were supposed to receive the same educational opportunities as white children, in practice this often did not happen.³⁷⁰ The fact that girls who were working were exempt indicates that the government's priorities were not solely concerned with the welfare of these children. As with other groups, it was only those who

³⁶⁷ P. Galbraith, Annual report, Police Department, Protectors Office, Normanton to Walter E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aboriginals, p. 5, January 22 1903, in-letter 107 of 1903, A/44679, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶⁸ Galbraith, Annual report, p. 5, January 22 1903, in-letter 107 of 1903, A/44679, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶⁹ Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Under Secretary, Lands Department, 17 May 1904, in-letter 930 of 1904, A/58927, Queensland State Archives. See also Kidd, *The way we civilise*, p. 20.

³⁷⁰ The idea of schooling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children separately from white children was implicit in the acts (Williamson, *Schooling the Torres Strait Islanders*, p. 71). See Departmental Advisory Committee minute book: Record of business conducted at the eleventh meeting of the Departmental Advisory Committee on 25 September 1917, (letter from Thomas Hogben, Itinerant Teacher, regarding the tuition of half-caste children), A/75315, Queensland State Archives; Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, pp. 7-8. In some cases, the difficulty of persuading teachers to reside in areas in which they were the only Europeans hindered the provision of education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: Protector of Aboriginals, Thursday Island to Under Secretary, Home Secretary's Department, 21 December 1906, in-letter 195 of 1907, A/58908, Queensland State Archives.

were “unproductive” who had to be segregated from the community.³⁷¹ This is further suggested by the fact that, in 1904 to 1905, dissatisfaction with Roth centred on the issue of employment.³⁷² His successor, Richard B. Howard, stated that it was his aim to have every Aboriginal person in Queensland in employment.³⁷³

The *Queenslander* was generally more sympathetic to the situation of Aboriginal people than many other press sources at this time. In 1910, this newspaper reported on an Aboriginal man who had displayed “original talent”.³⁷⁴ They argued that this was “proof that the aborigine has latent brain power, which by judicious teaching and training may develop in unexpected ways.”³⁷⁵ In a 1914 article, the *Queenslander* appeared to be defending the mental capabilities of Aboriginal people, arguing that although “burdened with the neglect of centuries, the average blackfellow is quick witted, and sometimes really smart.”³⁷⁶ It was quickly revealed, however, that this intelligence had very specific limitations: “Under a good, firm master he is often a splendid servant ... But left to himself he is unreliable.”³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ Evans, “*A permanent precedent*”, p. 14; Evans, “The hidden colonists”, p. 76; W. Ross Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988), p. 457.

³⁷² Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 185.

³⁷³ Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, p. 186.

³⁷⁴ “Aboriginal inventiveness”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 January 1910, p. 39.

³⁷⁵ “Aboriginal inventiveness”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 January 1910, p. 39.

³⁷⁶ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

³⁷⁷ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

Similar attitudes on the necessity of white control of Aboriginal people were held by Bleakley. In 1914, he told the *Queenslander* that:

It is our duty to educate him [the Aboriginal] by practical teaching up to a higher standard of life, to teach him the duty of self help, and show him how he can do it by surrounding him with the best things of our civilisation. ... And it is impossible to reap a large success until the whole of the aboriginal races are placed under the control and supervision of experienced and conscientious Christian men ...³⁷⁸

These articles show the way in which any debate on Aboriginal intelligence was limited by the prejudices of the time. Even in discussing Aboriginal ability, it was constantly reiterated that discipline and control were necessary.³⁷⁹ This article displayed similar attitudes towards the mental capacity of Aboriginal people as those revealed by similar articles on other non-European races, especially those believed to be “primitive” races. In other words, the highest praise that could be envisioned for such people was that they worked effectively for white people.³⁸⁰

There were few dissenting opinions on the subject of the efficacy of education and training, but one was provided by Rawson, writing in the *Queenslander*. She discussed the supposed success of mission homes and stations in educating and training Aboriginal people, not to mention

³⁷⁸ “Aboriginal characteristics”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 8.

³⁷⁹ See also “The northern Aboriginals”, *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1900, p. 4.

³⁸⁰ These attitudes were typical at the time. See A. T. Yarwood, “Sir Raphael Cilento and *The white man in the tropics*”, in Roy MacLeod and Donald Denoon, eds, *Health and healing in tropical Australia and Papua New Guinea* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1991), pp. 47-8.

“disciplining” and “civilising” them.³⁸¹ She was suspicious, however, asking:

But how long would it last if they were left to themselves? In a year they would be back to the primitive with no knowledge gained, and no influence to restrain their original methods. In my humble opinion the aboriginal is untamable.³⁸²

Although Rawson did not think it was worth trying to educate people, her language once again echoed that used about mental “defectives”. Like this group of people, Rawson felt that Aboriginal people were prone to unrestrained instincts, compounded in this case by their primitive natures.³⁸³ Rawson’s arguments were possibly representative of racist attitudes that were more concerned with racial purity than economic productiveness.

The policy of providing mainly vocational education and training on missions continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century.³⁸⁴

In 1931, Bleakley stated that:

The inmates [at the missions] receive simple manual and domestic training calculated to fit them, either on the Settlement or in outside employment, to earn their own living, but principally to make them self-reliant and industrious members of their own community. ... It has been noticed that this civilising influence is

³⁸¹ “Making the best of it: Mrs. Lance Rawson’s reminiscences: the Aboriginals”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

³⁸² “Making the best of it”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 March 1920, p. 5.

³⁸³ The belief that Aboriginal people were animalistic was widespread on the frontier (Loos, “The pragmatic racism of the frontier”, p. 291). See also Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, p. 107. As O’Brien points out, mental “defectives” were also often likened to animals (“Protecting the social body”, p. 196).

³⁸⁴ Williamson, *Schooling the Torres Strait Islanders*, pp. 71-5. This policy was encouraged on missions as well as reserves: Visit of hon. J. Stopford, Home Secretary, to northern Aboriginal stations, p. 4, no date, in-letter not provided, A/18915, Queensland State Archives.

gradually but successfully combating the old retarding tribal superstitions.³⁸⁵

In 1937, in the government produced film *The Aboriginal problem in Queensland*, the policy on missions was described as being:

The development of protective activities with a view firstly to make the Institutions, as much as possible, self-supporting, and secondly, but not least, to provide for the native the education and training in the settled industrious life, thus cultivating a spirit of independence ...³⁸⁶

A document prepared in the late 1930s on the administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals under Edward Hanlon revealed that the object of the missions was still to provide “benevolent supervision and protection” without interfering in tribal life more than necessary.³⁸⁷ The government thus aimed to prepare Aboriginal people for a change to “settled industrious community life”, educating them to provide for themselves.³⁸⁸ Children were to receive a “simple education” aimed at providing them with manual and domestic training, and the ability “to protect themselves in business dealings”.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia*, p. 10.

³⁸⁶ Notes for assistance in description of the film – “The Aboriginal Problem in Queensland”, p. 9, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58913 (JWB/VH), Queensland State Archives.

³⁸⁷ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 2, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³⁸⁸ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 2, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³⁸⁹ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, pp. 2-3, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

Despite the focus on productivity, even those Aboriginal people who were economically productive were closely scrutinised. They did not receive their wages, which were paid to the government in trust, and they were still considered to need “treatment and protection” in their business dealings.³⁹⁰ The government also strictly supervised their private lives, ostensibly to guard against prostitution, alcohol, drugs and other forms of exploitation, but also, as government documents state, in order to maintain order and discipline.³⁹¹ At around the same time as the training farm was established at Dalby in order to provide for the vocational training of “backward” youths, the government undertook a trial in the vocational training of selected Aboriginal youths, aimed at placing them in a general manual instruction scheme.³⁹² The government also discussed establishing a rural school system, with the aim of qualifying Aboriginal youths “to fill the ranks of the necessary skilled labour for Settlement development purposes”; it was not, as the Labor government was quick to point out, aimed at training these youths to compete with white labour.³⁹³

Despite the beginning of changing attitudes during the 1940s, older ideas proved remarkably persistent. In 1942, Bleakley retired and was

³⁹⁰ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 4, A/58915, Queensland State Archives. See also Reynolds and May, “Queensland”, pp. 189-92.

³⁹¹ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 4, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³⁹² Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, p. 7, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

³⁹³ Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals, pp. 7-8, A/58915, Queensland State Archives.

replaced by Cornelius O'Leary. In 1946, in response to calls to confer the franchise on certain categories of "full-blood" Aborigines, O'Leary stated that no "responsible authority" would seriously consider conferring the franchise on all Aboriginal people, most of whom were still living in a "primitive" state.³⁹⁴ He argued that they would be unable to cope with living "according to the advanced standard of a highly civilized community."³⁹⁵ There were, however, a minority of "full-blood" Aborigines

... who, through association and education and the process of time and evolution, have acquired and developed civilized habits and faculties sufficiently as to now have become useful contributory units in the community life of the nation and to withhold full rights and privileges of citizenship to these few seems unjust.³⁹⁶

The difficulty was in determining which Aboriginal people were in which category. O'Leary argued that certain attributes should be evident before the franchise was conferred. These included employment, and evidence that the person was "of good behaviour and repute and [was] living under civilized conditions of a reasonable standard".³⁹⁷

In 1947, the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland, the state branch of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, wrote to Jones, the Minister

³⁹⁴ Cornelius O'Leary, Director of Native Affairs, Brisbane to the Prime Minister, Canberra, 28 March 1946, in-letter 2636 of 1946, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

³⁹⁵ O'Leary to the Prime Minister, 28 March 1946, in-letter 2636 of 1946, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

³⁹⁶ O'Leary to the Prime Minister, 28 March 1946, in-letter 2636 of 1946, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

³⁹⁷ O'Leary to Prime Minister 28 March 1946, in-letter 2636 of 1946, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

for Health and Home Affairs, seeking to send a deputation to discuss a recent resolution of the council.³⁹⁸ This resolution stated that the council should press for “a more realistic attitude” towards Aboriginal people, “based on a recognition of the handicaps of a previous primitive existence no longer existing.”³⁹⁹ The resolution contended that the main requirement of Aboriginal people was the opportunity to “compete on equal terms with white workers in all callings”.⁴⁰⁰ It also argued that they should be granted full citizenship rights.⁴⁰¹ In response, O’Leary, to whom Jones forwarded the resolution for comment, stated that Queensland government policy towards Aboriginal people was based on an understanding of their psychology.⁴⁰² He continued that it would be “futile to attempt to implement a scheme for the advancement of a race suffering the handicap which these people are under comparable with whites.”⁴⁰³ Despite the advancement of Aboriginal standards of living during the previous thirty years, they had not reached “the standard of

³⁹⁸ R. Brown, Acting Secretary, Trades and Labor Council of Queensland to A. Jones, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 30 May 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

³⁹⁹ Trades and Labor Council of Queensland to Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 30 May 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁰⁰ Trades and Labor Council of Queensland to Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 30 May 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁰¹ Trades and Labor Council of Queensland to Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 30 May 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁰² O’Leary, Director of Native Affairs to the Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 5 June 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁰³ O’Leary to Department of Health and Home Affairs, 5 June 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

white civilization.”⁴⁰⁴ Even compared to other “primitive races”, Aboriginal people were “industrially lazy and possessed of no initiative”, and unhygienic: “That is the background of the inherited handicap which the present day aboriginal carries.”⁴⁰⁵ Education of the younger generation was the only solution to the problem, according to O’Leary.

By this time, concerns were also increasing about the conditions of Torres Strait Islanders, who were no longer seen as a protected “race”. In 1949, Charles Wanstall, the member for Toowong, told parliament that the standards of living at Thursday Island were worse than they had ever been, due to an undermining of morality, morale and self-reliance by white racketeers.⁴⁰⁶ Although this accusation was strongly refuted by the government, it was indicative of a changed attitude.⁴⁰⁷ In the same year, Turner stated that the Aborigines from further north Queensland were more “primitive” and less “domesticated”, and thus harder to deal with than their southern counterparts.⁴⁰⁸ Müller argued that Aboriginal people were demoralised because they were not given enough

⁴⁰⁴ O’Leary to Department of Health and Home Affairs, 5 June 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁰⁵ O’Leary to Department of Health and Home Affairs, 5 June 1947, in-letter 1A/209, SRS505-1-1, Box 51, Queensland State Archives. These attitudes had been common earlier in the century. See “North Queensland sketches: all that was left”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1920, p. 41; “Making the best of it: Mrs. Lance Rawson’s reminiscences”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 March 1920, p. 5; *Mackay Daily Mercury*, 3 January 1929, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 194 (2 November 1948-49), p. 1118.

⁴⁰⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 194 (2 November 1948-49), p. 1118.

⁴⁰⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 194 (2 November 1948-49), p. 1119.

opportunities to work, and if this situation was rectified they would become “useful citizens”.⁴⁰⁹

During the first half of the twentieth century, discourse about the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland displayed the influence of eugenic ideas. This influence was most clearly seen in fears of miscegenation, and in discussion about that group of people designated as “half-castes”. In popular newspapers similar language was used about Aboriginal people as that used to describe the mentally “unfit”. This was particularly apparent in the way in which both groups were identified as a “menace” to both the community and to racial fitness. In official government documents, similar policies were formulated to deal with both these “problems”. The segregation of “full-blooded” Aboriginal people from both “half-castes” and the white community was reminiscent of moves to segregate the “feeble-minded” from the wider community. Although avowedly humanitarian motives were apparent in the formation of this policy, it was clear that the potential impact on the rest of the community was considered of paramount importance.

In practical terms, those people who were unproductive economically faced much harsher penalties and were much more likely to face the practical consequences of these beliefs than those who were in

⁴⁰⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 194 (2 November 1948-49), p. 1129.

employment.⁴¹⁰ These concerns were widespread, and partly focused on social order and control, but many of the anxieties expressed and the language used revealed that there were other fears present. These fears focused on ideas of racial purity, including a eugenic belief in the degenerating results of miscegenation, and the debilitating effect on racial fitness for both black and white which would inevitably result from contact between the races.

⁴¹⁰ Those Aboriginal people in employment rarely enjoyed the economic benefits of their labour; as noted above, their wages were paid to the government, providing an even greater reason not to remove them from employment in order to segregate them (Huggins and Huggins, *Auntie Rita*, p. 33; Kidd, *The way we civilise*, pp. 73-5, 128-36).

Chapter Five

Children and education, eugenic ideology and racial fitness

In 1932, Leslie St. Vincent Welch, the Chief Medical Officer of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction, wrote to the Queensland Home Secretary, Edward Hanlon, in response to a request for information on mental “defectives” in Queensland. Welch told Hanlon that he considered mental “defectives” to be “useless individual[s]”, and added that he believed that the “extent and thoroughness of education focuses the light of criticism on the person of marked poor mentality like an ink spot on a white cloth”.¹ Hanlon’s inquiry, and Welch’s response, occurred during the Queensland government’s inquiries into the sterilisation of mental “defectives”, in response to a request from the British government for information about this subject. Welch’s language and sentiments, however, are also relevant to a discussion of the incidence of eugenic ideology and racial fitness in discourse about children and education in Queensland.² This chapter argues that such

¹ L. St Vincent Welch, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Public Instruction to Home Secretary, 22 December 1932, in-letter 7871 of 1932, A/3706, Queensland State Archives.

² Welch’s views were similar to those of international eugenicists. See, for example, Raymond B. Cattell, *The fight for our national intelligence* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1937), pp. 5-6. See also Angus McLaren, “The creation of a haven for ‘Human Thoroughbreds’: the sterilization of the feeble-minded and the mentally ill in British Columbia”, *Canadian Historical Review*, 68, 2 (1986), pp. 130-31.

ideas were present in debate about these subjects in Queensland, and were often expressed by those in influential positions in relation to children in the state. Children were often targeted in discourse about racial fitness, as they were identified as the future of the race.

In order to examine the incidence of ideas about racial fitness in discourse on children and education in Queensland between 1900 and 1950, this chapter will consider three main areas in which ideas of racial fitness were important. First, the chapter will examine discourse about mentally “unfit” children in Queensland schools, with a particular focus on mentally “defective” children. It will argue that the ideas expressed about these children were similar to ideas which were expressed about mentally “unfit” adults during this time. These ideas, and particularly an obsession with classification and categorisation, were more apparent in relation to children as it was believed to be important to discover these conditions at the earliest possible stage. This section will also discuss the special provisions which were outlined for children under the *Backward Persons Act* of 1938. Secondly, the chapter will examine discourse about other groups of children targeted as “problem” groups. Finally, it will examine discourse about the education of “normal” children in Queensland, including discussion about school medical inspections, sex education and physical training.

This chapter argues that ideas about eugenics and racial fitness were present in these discourses in Queensland in the first half of the twentieth century, and that some practical outcomes for children in this state were influenced by those who held these ideas. For obvious reasons, this discourse was less likely than others to focus on controlling the reproductive capacity of the targeted group, although there was an implicit assumption that this might become necessary at some future point. Michel Foucault discusses the ways in which discourses relating to the sex of children and adolescents multiplied and developed from the eighteenth century onwards, to become contentious issues which encompassed various “institutional devices and discursive strategies”, all relevant to hierarchical power relations.³ An examination of eugenic influence on ideas about education in Queensland reveals how a range of programs implemented in the early twentieth century could be influenced by eugenic ideology and racial fitness.⁴ As the century progressed, explicit concerns about racial fitness became less obvious in the administration of these programs. The practical benefits of these programs, however, were such that many continued well after 1950. By the 1940s, references to racial fitness had largely been replaced by the idea of national fitness, which involved many similar ideas, but placed a

³ Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality Volume 1: an introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 27-30. Ruth A. Wallace and Alison Wolf, *Contemporary sociological theory: expanding the classical tradition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), pp. 376-78, discuss the sociology of methods of controlling the fertility of a population in order to secure its reproduction. See also Lynette Finch, *The classing gaze: sexuality, class and surveillance* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993), p. 55.

⁴ See David Kirk and Karen Twigg, “Regulating Australian bodies: eugenics, anthropometrics and school medical inspection in Victoria, 1900-1940”, *History of Education Review*, 23, 1 (1994), p. 19.

greater focus on environmental influences on the individual, as opposed to hereditary influences on the race.

There were many differing views on education within the eugenics movement, although there was a consensus that education was essential for racial improvement.⁵ Galton believed that the development of the child mirrored that of the species, and many eugenicists followed this idea in arguing that the proper development of the child was crucial to racial progress.⁶ Karl Pearson, Galton's "successor" as leader of the eugenics movement, did not believe in the value of education to improve "degenerates".⁷ Other eugenicists argued that the "social ladder" was so nearly perfect that anyone who was born with natural ability and intelligence, whatever their class, would rise to the top, and that no amount of education would help those who did not possess innate

⁵ This view developed during the early twentieth century, in response to medical and eugenic influences on beliefs about the importance of children to a healthy race (Mary Kooyman, *Children as a resource: attitudes to childhood in nineteenth century Britain*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1999, pp. 131-33). This attitude was also influenced by the introduction of compulsory schooling, and the incidence of physical and mental "defect" which this uncovered, particularly among working class children (Jose Harris, *Private lives, public spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 199; McLaren, "The creation of a haven for 'human thoroughbreds'", pp. 131-32). Graham Murdock and Robin McCron argued that middle class anxiety during the late nineteenth century led to a focus on controlling working class militancy, and that this was to be achieved partially through the school system ("Consciousness of class and consciousness of generation", in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds, *Resistance through rituals: youth sub-cultures in post-war Britain* (Birmingham: HarperCollins Academic, 1976), pp. 192-3).

⁶ Judith Bessant, "Described, measured and labelled: eugenics, youth policy and moral panic in Victoria in the 1950s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 31 (1991), pp. 14-15.

⁷ Daniel J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics: genetics and the uses of human heredity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 21; G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain 1900-1914* (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976), p. 47.

ability.⁸ Leonard Darwin was a greater supporter of education, but stressed that it should fit children for their parents' way of life.

Eugenicists encouraged educating the young on eugenic principles, and also about sex hygiene, venereal disease, pregnancy and child care, in order to impress on them their responsibility to reproduce a healthy race.⁹ Daniel Kevles argues that although this education focused on "positive" eugenics, it equally encouraged contemplation of "negative" eugenics, as marriages between "fit" and "unfit" individuals were discouraged by such teaching.¹⁰ In Britain and America, views on hereditary determinism found their way into the curricula of "normal schools", and some educators actively supported these ideas and promoted them to the children under their care.¹¹ For the most part, eugenicists believed that education had an important, but limited function in racial improvement.¹² These views revealed the belief in complex interactions between environmental and hereditary influences,

⁸ "Education and eugenics: the efficiency of the English public school", *The Times* (London), 29 July 1912, p. 4; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 52-5.

⁹ Margaret Conley, "Citizens – protect your birthright!: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), p. 8; Karl Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics* 2nd ed. (London: Dulau, 1909), p. 12; Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 89; Mary Scharlieb, *Womanhood and race-regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1912), p. 31.

¹⁰ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 89.

¹¹ Marouf Arif Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics in Anglo-American thought* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 36.

¹² In 1911, Havelock Ellis argued that the feeble-minded could be educated to some extent, but that this would provide no benefits to their children (*The problem of race regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911), p. 66). See also W. Jethro Brown, "Economic welfare and racial vitality", *Economic Record*, 3, 4 (1927), p. 28; David McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", *Melbourne Working Papers*, 4 (1982/3), p. 18.

as it was argued that the environment should be improved as much as possible, but that heredity would ultimately dictate ability.¹³

Several Australian historians maintain that eugenic ideas held a place in Australian education. In his 1994 review article "Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history", Rob Watts states that educational research in Australia before and after World War I reflected eugenicist preoccupations and methodologies.¹⁴ His assertion is based in part on a 1991 article by Judith Bessant in which she contends that eugenicists played a key role in the development of Australian discourses about adolescence and delinquency.¹⁵ David McCallum argues that the influence of eugenic thought was seen in the obsession with measuring and classifying the differences in children's behaviour, performance and abilities.¹⁶ The assumption that there were innate differences between children was a eugenic concept, and the eugenics movement was instrumental in transforming strategies which were evolved for the detection of "defectives" into strategies for measuring differences between "normal" children.¹⁷ Grant Rodwell has found that

¹³ Leonard Darwin, *The need for eugenic reform* (London: John Murray, 1926), pp. 58-72; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 35. In 1927, A. F. Tredgold argued that education on inheritance was the best way to prevent the reproduction of the unfit ("Galton Anniversary Lecture: eugenics and mental disorder", *The Times* (London), 17 February 1927, p. 12). See also "Sanitation and eugenics: address by Sir J. Crichton-Browne", *The Times* (London), 4 September 1912, p. 6.

¹⁴ Rob Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history", *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 40, 3 (1994), p. 326.

¹⁵ Bessant, "Described, measured and labelled", p. 14.

¹⁶ McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", pp. 17-18.

¹⁷ Howard Horwitz, "Always with us", *American Literary History*, 10, 2 (1998), pp. 322, 332; McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", p. 18.

eugenic influence was apparent in the development of playgrounds and the kindergarten system, and that eugenic ideas were promoted in a popular children's encyclopedia.¹⁸ Stephen Garton points out that, while eugenicists focused on the institutionalisation of the "unfit", educators were left with the task of training "normal" children in order "to ensure national and racial progress", and that these goals were complementary.¹⁹

Most Australian intellectuals concerned with issues of racial improvement believed that education was important, an idea which was consistent with various nineteenth century ideologies which promoted schooling as essential in maintaining social order.²⁰ Many influential educators, in common with other professionals, were involved in the eugenics movement.²¹ Professor Harvey Sutton, for example, was

¹⁸ Grant Rodwell, "Curing the precocious masturbator", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 59 (1998), pp. 82-92; "Lessons in eugenics from Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopedia*", *Education and Research Perspectives*, 24, 1 (1997), pp. 94-110; "Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement": eugenics and Australian civic and school playgrounds, 1900-1920", *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 37, 2 (1996), pp. 129-48.

¹⁹ Stephen Garton, "Sir Charles Mackellar: psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales, 1900-1914", *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), p. 32.

²⁰ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies: re-considering eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940", *Australian Historical Studies*, 103 (1994), pp. 172-73; McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia", p. 18. Liberals, in particular, had a great faith in the power of education to make all citizens "useful" to the state (Stuart Macintyre, *Winners and losers: the pursuit of social justice in Australian history* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 97-8. For nineteenth century ideology see Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or rebels?: an oral history of working-class childhood and youth 1889-1939* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1981), pp. 30-3; Kooyman, *Children as a resource*, especially pp. 209-263; Keith Laybourn, *The evolution of British social policy and the welfare state c. 1800-1993* (Keele, Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1995), pp. 105-19.

²¹ Ross Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots: eugenic legislation in Victoria, 1918-1939", *Australian Historical Studies*, 30, 113 (1999), p. 322; Michael Roe, *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought 1890-1960* (St Lucia:

particularly interested in anthropometric research, as was W. Ramsay Smith, the Director of Public Health in South Australia.²² W. Jethro Brown argued that although education could not improve racial vitality, it could have beneficial effects on individuals, in teaching children good habits.²³ Both the eugenics and the mental hygiene movements were concerned with mental testing in schools and the control of mental "defectives" and juvenile delinquents, although the mental hygiene movement was more clearly focused on the value of education.²⁴ In Queensland, the situation was somewhat different.

During the nineteenth century, Queensland governments were relatively slow to provide educational opportunities.²⁵ Impetus for the establishment of schools in the colony came from private sources. The reasons for the lack of government support were found in the philosophies of hard work and self help that were pervasive in Queensland at this time.²⁶ Under the *Education Act* of 1875, primary

University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp. 61-5, 100-1; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", pp. 322-24.

²² Kirk and Twigg, "Regulating Australian bodies", pp. 22-4; Milton Lewis, *Managing madness: psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), p. 131; Grant Rodwell, "Professor Harvey Sutton: national hygienist as eugenicist and educator", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, 2 (1998), p. 165.

²³ Brown, "Economic welfare and racial vitality", pp. 24-6. See also Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 33-5, for a discussion of Brown's views on education.

²⁴ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", pp. 170, 178.

²⁵ Ross Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), p. 305; W. Ross Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988), p. 439.

²⁶ Raymond Evans, "The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland", in Jill Roe, ed., *Social policy in Australia: some perspectives 1901-1975* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1976), pp. 75, 94; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 439.

education became free, secular and compulsory.²⁷ Secondary education, however, was neglected in Queensland during the nineteenth century, and for most of the first half of the twentieth.²⁸ The first teacher training college was not established in Brisbane until 1914.²⁹ Prior to this date, the pupil-teacher system was used. The University of Queensland was established in 1909 and commenced teaching in 1911.³⁰ Although conservative governments in Queensland claimed progress in a number of areas of education in the early twentieth century, attitudes towards the subject had not changed significantly from the nineteenth century.³¹ The 1875 act established the Department of Public Instruction, which continued until 1957, when it was renamed the Department of Education. After 1915, Labor governments generally placed a low priority on education.³² The *Education Act* of 1875 was not repealed until 1964,

²⁷ This act was for the most part a copy of Victorian legislation (Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 441).

²⁸ Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 447; J. R. Lawry, "Education", in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, *Labor in power: the Labor party and governments in Queensland 1915-57* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 358.

²⁹ Greg Logan and Eddie Clark, *State education in Queensland: a brief history* (Brisbane: Policy and Information Services Branch, Department of Education, 1984), p. 2. The pupil-teacher system was phased out between 1923 and 1935.

³⁰ E. R. Wyeth, *Education in Queensland: a history of education in Queensland and in the Moreton Bay District of New South Wales* (Melbourne: Australian Council for Education Research, 195-), pp. 172-73. See also "Teachers' union", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 18 January 1908, p. 42; "Education", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 25 January 1908, p. 42.

³¹ Lawry, "Education", p. 356.

³² Douglas Gordon, "Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine", in R. L. Doherty, ed., *A medical school for Queensland* (St Lucia: Boolarong Publications, 1986), p. 15; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 450; Lawry, "Education", pp. 355, 360.

although there were various amendments.³³ This was indicative of the lack of initiative in education in Queensland between 1900 and 1950.

There is evidence that Queensland awarded a low priority to national education conferences. A 1922 communication from the Director of Education for Western Australia, asking whether Queensland intended sending a representative to the conference that year, carried the strong implication that the state was often not represented.³⁴ In 1924, although Queensland had specifically requested some issues to be placed on the agenda, the Queensland representative, B. J. McKenna, the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, was unable to attend the conference due to illness.³⁵ He did, however, indicate the willingness of the Queensland government to host the 1926 conference.³⁶

³³ Greg Logan, *Sex education in Queensland: a history of the debate since 1900* (Brisbane: Education History Unit, Department of Education, 1991), p. 4. Amendments were often related to relatively minor issues such as the refund of allowances under the scholarship scheme (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 193 (20 October 1948-49), p. 847).

³⁴ Cecil Andrews, Director of Education, Perth to Director, Department of Education, Brisbane, 9 May 1922, in-letter 20884 of 1922, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives. Queensland decided to send the Agent-General for Queensland (Director of Education, Brisbane to Director of Education, Perth, 1 June 1922, in-letter 20884 of 1922, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives).

³⁵ B. McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane to Cecil Andrews, Director of Education, Perth, 2 December 1924, in-letter not provided; Andrews to McKenna, 21 November 1924, in-letter 55979 of 1924, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶ Brisbane was the only capital city which had not hosted a conference (Telegram from Andrews to Education Department, Brisbane, 17 November 1924, in-letter 53680 of 1924; McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane to Andrews, Director of Education, Perth, 2 December 1924, in-letter not provided, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives).

The importance attached to the “proper” development of children can be discerned from a 1920 article in the *Queenslander*. The article was written by an A. M. Drysdale, who claimed that:

... any stranger observing our haphazard methods with abandoned, unclaimed, destitute, or orphaned children can only account for the amazing physical welfare of the British Empire by attributing to our race a double share of original hardihood.³⁷

Drysdale argued that:

Not only cannot we afford to lose a single child who is capable of being reared to healthy maturity, but we cannot even afford to withhold from the poorest, least promising child the largest opportunity of success in the battle of life, which is ultimately a battle of nations and races. It is the child who will win or lose all.³⁸

In 1938, the *Courier Mail* argued that education was vital for the future good of the race.³⁹ The attitudes stated in the *Queenslander* did not reflect government policy, under which education was generally neglected. This was apparent in relation to debate over the education of mentally “defective” and “backward” children.

Mentally “unfit” children

Mentally defective children were a site of particular eugenic interest, and a target of concerns about racial fitness. While there were widespread anxieties about mentally “unfit” adults, debate on this issue often

³⁷ “Peopling the empire: the children’s chance in a new land”, *Queenslander*, 15 May 1920, p. 6.

³⁸ “Peopling the empire”, *Queenslander*, 15 May 1920, p. 6.

³⁹ “Youth and freedom”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 8 October 1938, p. 4.

focused on children, since it was believed that early detection was essential in the treatment of these children. The most frequently espoused idea about the treatment of intellectually impaired children at this time was that they should be segregated from other children, and taught in special institutions.⁴⁰ These special institutions would provide low-level general education and training, in order to help the children to reach their (presumed limited) potential, but would also reduce crime and immorality, which were considered to be linked to mental deficiency.⁴¹ The main difference in debate about mentally defective “children”, as opposed to adults, was that there was less concern about their reproduction, although this subject was not entirely absent. Ideas about racial fitness in education focused on identifying and dealing with mentally “defective” children.⁴² These children were thus doubly the target of discourses about racial fitness. Interest in mentally “defective” children did not always reflect the influence of eugenic or racial fitness ideology. In some cases, such interest was more focused on the

⁴⁰ Geoffrey Swan, *From segregation to integration: the development of special education in Queensland*, PhD thesis, Education Department, University of Queensland, 1997, p. 138. See, for example, “The prevention of destitution: medical overlapping”, *The Times* (London), 3 June 1911, p. 7; “Care of the feeble-minded: doctors and the Bill”, *The Times* (London), 27 May 1912, p. 4. For a contrasting opinion see “The doctrine of formal training: the backward child in school”, *The Times* (London), 6 January 1912, p. 4.

⁴¹ “Eugenics and degeneration”, *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4; “Feeble-minded children who drift into crime”, *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14; Tony Austin, “Cecil Cook, scientific thought and ‘Half-castes’”, *Aboriginal History*, 14, 1-2 (1990), p. 109; Mary Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency”, *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), p. 40; Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 28; Mark Finnane, *Punishment in Australian society* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 68.

⁴² “The feeble-minded: I. – the problem”, *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4; Kooyman, *Children as a resource*, pp. 131-33; McLaren, “The creation of a haven for ‘human thoroughbreds’”, pp. 131-32; Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 35.

children's wellbeing, and in others, on controlling them, in order to make the job of educators easier. These concerns often overlapped.

In Australia during the early 1910s, most states had at least some strategies in place for the treatment – and usually segregation – of mentally “defective” children. In both New South Wales and Victoria, the only provisions made for the treatment and control of mental “defectives” focused on special institutions where “feeble-minded” children were segregated.⁴³ The New South Wales Education Department was in the process of collecting information to help formulate a scheme for the education and training of feeble-minded school children.⁴⁴ In Victoria, the main accommodation was that of the “Idiot Cottages” at Kew, which housed idiots and imbeciles; feeble-minded children were certified.⁴⁵ The Victorian Inspector General of the Insane, W. E. Jones, argued that although about half of these were determined incapable of receiving education or training, the other half could be trained to do some manual work, and were “made some slight use of.”⁴⁶ An inquiry was being

⁴³ Chief Secretary, Sydney to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 21 August 1912, in-letter 10643 of 1912, A/31784; Chief Secretary, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 10997 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁴ Memorandum from Eric Sinclair, Inspector General of the Insane to Chief Secretary, 15 August 1912, in-letter 10643 of 1912; Chief Secretary, Sydney to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 21 August 1912, in-letter 10643 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁵ In 1912, these cottages contained about 320 people (Chief Secretary, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912, in-letter 10997 of 1912; copy of memorandum from W. Ernest Jones, Inspector General of the Insane, regarding mental defectives, in-letter 10997 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives).

⁴⁶ Chief Secretary, Melbourne to Home Secretary, Brisbane, 30 August 1912; memorandum from Jones regarding mental defectives, in-letter 10997 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

conducted in Victoria, and Jones expressed his hope that it would demonstrate the need for the provision of special education for feeble-minded children. The first school for mentally defective children was established in Victoria in 1913.⁴⁷

At the 1911 Australasian Medical Congress, a committee was appointed to carry out a national survey of the intelligence of school children, largely as a result of pressure from J. S. C. Elkington.⁴⁸ This survey was undertaken in 1912, and focused on school age children, in an attempt to discover the prevalence of feeble-mindedness.⁴⁹ The aim was to institute special education for those who were “unfitted” for school. Although the medical profession was behind the formation of the survey, and played a dominant role in its supervision, it was educators who conducted it. The survey design was flawed, and consequently some state education departments, including Queensland, refused to participate.⁵⁰ Most private schools and medical practitioners also declined, although this may have been the result of a lack of interest as much as resistance. The results of the survey did not provide evidence to support claims that

⁴⁷ W. Ernest Jones, *Report on mental deficiency in the Commonwealth of Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Printer, 1929), p. 10.

⁴⁸ Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 27; Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 112.

⁴⁹ “Mentally defective children: an important investigation: scheme for special education”, *Age* (Melbourne), 29 July 1912, p. 6; McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, p. 27.

⁵⁰ It is not clear why Queensland did not participate (Swan, *From integration to segregation*, pp. 147-48). Western Australia also refused, and although New South Wales participated, it chose to withhold the results of its independent survey, on the grounds that the results would be misleading (McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, pp. 28-30).

racial degeneration was occurring in Australia.⁵¹ Nevertheless, it did indicate that a problem existed, sufficient to require state intervention.⁵² Garton argues that the evidence supported both eugenic and environmentalist points of view: a small percentage of school age children had sufficient mental defect to warrant segregation, and others, who were only “mentally dull”, would be helped by strategies such as special education.⁵³

The eventual results of the survey were confused, probably due at least in part to the fact that teachers were not given clear directions about what they were measuring.⁵⁴ There were great variations between the states. David McCallum argues that the survey served to confirm the belief that feeble-mindedness was not only hereditary, but also the major cause of social disorders, such as crime.⁵⁵ He further argues that as a result of these beliefs, the committee emphasised the need to control mental defectives through segregation, both in the interests of the children, and for the benefit of the community. While this may have been true in other states, in Queensland, the results of the survey remained little more than a footnote. In 1914, the *Queenslander* reported that the issue of the provision of care for mentally deficient children which was raised at the Medical Congress in New Zealand was also “engaging the

⁵¹ Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 28.

⁵² McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, p. 30.

⁵³ Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 28.

⁵⁴ McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, p. 29.

⁵⁵ McCallum, “Eugenics, psychology and education in Australia”, p. 30.

attention of the Department of Public Instruction in Queensland.”⁵⁶ The results of the national survey were not reported in the newspaper. In view of the reluctance of Queensland schools to participate in the survey it cannot be considered surprising. It was also indicative of a general neglect of this subject in Queensland at this time.

Special education was largely ignored by Queensland governments until the 1920s.⁵⁷ The slowness of provision for intellectually impaired children was partly due to the belief that their difficulties were their own fault.⁵⁸ Also, most of these children came from poorer backgrounds, and their parents were unable to organise help on their behalf. This was another example of the neglect of a group considered “useless” to Queensland society.⁵⁹ Interestingly, in his 1907 book, Elkington argued that educators were too apt to diagnose abnormality in children where none existed.⁶⁰ He strongly advised ruling out physical causes before exploring psychological ones for mental “deficiency”, stating that there were many physical causes for apparent “stupidity”.⁶¹ It is possible that, in view of Elkington’s strong influence on the development of medical inspections in Queensland, it was believed that physical inspections would remedy a great deal of apparent mental “deficiency”. In 1912, in

⁵⁶ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 February 1914, p. 9.

⁵⁷ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 15.

⁵⁸ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 15.

⁵⁹ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, pp. 75-6, 94-5; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 457.

⁶⁰ J. S. C. Elkington, *Health in the school, or Hygiene for teachers* (London: Blackie, 1907), p. 144.

⁶¹ Elkington, *Health in the school*, pp. 145-46.

response to a request from the Vice-Consul at the Consulate for the Netherlands for information on schools for mentally “deficient” children in Queensland,⁶² the Home Secretary, J. G. Appel, replied that none existed, and that these children were accommodated in Hospitals for the Insane.⁶³ It was this situation which led to periodic scandals such as the one at Goodna in 1915.⁶⁴ Appel continued that in one case, when several children who had been admitted to the Queensland Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution in South Brisbane had been subsequently found to be “deficient in intellect”, they were sent to a Hospital for the Insane.⁶⁵ This neglect suggests that these children were not identified as a particular threat to racial fitness, at least by the government, and were largely ignored.

Despite the neglect of the government, there is evidence that individual educators in the Public Instruction Department were interested in the issue.⁶⁶ Throughout the 1910s, the subject of mentally “defective” children was frequently discussed at national conferences relating to education. In 1916, at the inaugural Conference of Directors of

⁶² Vice-Consul, Consulate for the Netherlands to J. G. Appel, Home Secretary, 16 April 1912, in-letter 10744 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁶³ Appel to Consulate for the Netherlands, 11 May 1912, in-letter 5711 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁶⁴ Raymond L. Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government to 1919*, MA thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1970, pp. 130-32. In 1916, Ellerton planned separate wards for thirty boys; it was clear that this was partly due to moral considerations.

⁶⁵ Appel to Consulate for the Netherlands, 11 May 1912, in-letter 5711 of 1912, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

⁶⁶ Lawry, “Education”, p. 355.

Education in Adelaide, the issue of providing schools for mentally deficient children was raised.⁶⁷ The results of this discussion appear to indicate a consensus, at least among educators, that such schools should be provided, at least in the larger population centres. The resolutions of the conference also encompassed the establishment of institutions for the aftercare of “feebelminded” children, and provisions for the special training of teachers.⁶⁸ The Queensland representatives, R. H. Roe, the State Inspector-General of Schools between 1909 and 1917, and J. D. Story, the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, agreed with these resolutions.⁶⁹ Roe, in particular, was strongly in favour of them. He stated that in his school visits he had witnessed children with “no mental capacity at all”, and that provision for their education should be made.⁷⁰ He went further, stating that:

In my opinion, these mentally defective children are sometimes a positive danger to the rest of the children, amongst whom they have to be kept. Although mentally deficient, they are often strongly developed physically. They have not the moral or mental qualities sufficient to control themselves ...⁷¹

Roe thus identified mentally defective children as a danger to other children, but his concerns were about the present, and did not touch on

⁶⁷ Minutes of conference of directors of education, Adelaide, July 4th to 7th 1916, p. 6, no date, in-letter not provided, TR1356/2, Queensland State Archives.

⁶⁸ Minutes of conference of directors of education, July 1916, p. 6, TR1356/2, Queensland State Archives.

⁶⁹ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 19.

⁷⁰ Minutes of conference of directors of education, July 1916, p. 47, TR1356/2, Queensland State Archives.

⁷¹ Minutes of conference of directors of education, July 1916, p. 47, TR1356/2, Queensland State Archives.

the issue of racial fitness. His statement, however, that mentally deficient children lacked the moral or mental qualities to control themselves suggests that he perceived these children as less than human. His references to morality and lack of self-control also reflect the recurrent link which was drawn between mental “defectives” and uncontrolled sexuality.⁷² Despite Roe’s interest, the Queensland government took little action until the 1920s, and this was largely at the instigation of W. F. Bevington, the District Inspector of Schools.⁷³

Several initiatives focused on mentally “defective” children were undertaken in the 1920s in Australia. In 1920, the Tasmanian *Mental Deficiency Act*, influenced by eugenic and progressive ideas, and particularly targeting children, was passed.⁷⁴ The Tasmanian State Psychological Clinic was instructed to investigate school children as a matter of priority. In 1926, the Western Australian government established a similar State Psychological Clinic to test public institutions, including schools, gaols and children’s courts.⁷⁵ In 1922, a large

⁷² See Rosemary Berreen, “Illegitimacy and ‘feeble-mindedness’ in early twentieth-century New South Wales”, in Jane Long, Jan Gothard and Helen Brash, eds, *Forging identities: bodies, gender and feminist history* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1997), p. 218; Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 28; Jones, “The master potter and the rejected pots”, pp. 331-32; Searle, *Eugenics and politics in Britain*, p. 63. See, for example, “The feeble-minded: I. – the problem”, *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4.

⁷³ Hector Holthouse, *Looking back: the first 150 years of Queensland schools* (Brisbane: Department of Education, Queensland, 1975), p. 178.

⁷⁴ Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry, “Vessels of progressivism?: Tasmanian state girls and eugenics, 1900-1940”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), p. 325.

⁷⁵ Moira Fitzpatrick, “Preventing the unfit from breeding: the Mental Deficiency Bill in Western Australia, 1929”, in Penelope Hetherington, ed., *Childhood and society in Western Australia* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988), p. 147.

component of the National Directors' Conference centred on a discussion of mental deficiency.⁷⁶ The conference concluded that no state was yet doing everything possible in the treatment of mental deficiency. The consensus was that the first step in dealing with the problem was to carefully classify and grade all cases, including "imbeciles", "morons", and "naturally dull children".⁷⁷ Such classification was deemed necessary because it was believed that each group of children required different treatment, to be commenced as early as possible.⁷⁸ The focus on classification and early treatment reflected the growing influence of psychology and medicine in education, and also the desire to control groups identified as problematic.⁷⁹ A further resolution of the conference was that teachers "of suitable temperament and qualifications should be encouraged to devote special attention to the student of abnormal mentality".⁸⁰ The idea was that after a "correct diagnosis", children would be placed into graded classes administered by specially trained teachers. While the "lower grade morons" would have to "be segregated and kept permanently in special homes", the higher grades "might be trained

⁷⁶ R. H. Crawford, Secretary for Education, Hobart to Director of Education, Brisbane, 13 October 1922, in-letter 43431 of 1922; Crawford to Director, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 27 January 1923, in-letter 3733 of 1923, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁷ Crawford to Director of Education, Brisbane, 13 October 1922, in-letter 43431 of 1922; Crawford to Director, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 27 January 1923, in-letter 3733 of 1923, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

⁷⁸ "Feeble-minded children: need for proper classification and education", *The Times* (London), 10 May 1912, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Margaret Barbalet, *Far from a low gutter girl: the forgotten world of state wards, South Australia, 1887-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983); Finch, *The classing gaze*, pp. 40-1, 73-4; Humphries, *Hooligans or rebels?*, pp. 16-19; McCallum, "Eugenics, psychology and education", p. 17.

⁸⁰ Secretary for Education, Hobart to Director, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 27 January 1923, in-letter 3733 of 1923, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

specially in separate schools or classes.”⁸¹ It is not clear that these resolutions influenced the Queensland government, although representatives from the state were certainly present.

Of more immediate impact was a visit made by the Queensland representatives to the Australasian Conference of Inspectors in Melbourne to Victorian schools for mentally “defective” children,⁸² as requested by the Queensland Secretary for Public Instruction, John Huxham.⁸³ There were three representatives: B. J. McKenna, who at this time was a district inspector, but became Director of Education in 1923; William Taylor, also a district inspector; and Bevington. McKenna stated in his report that the experience had been of “great educational value”.⁸⁴ Taylor asserted that one of the most important aspects of the conference was discussion relating to backward and mentally deficient children.⁸⁵ He described the process which was occurring in Victoria of removing

⁸¹ Secretary for Education, Hobart to Director, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 27 January 1923, in-letter 3733 of 1923, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

⁸² Report of B. McKenna on visit to the Australasian Conference of Inspectors in Melbourne, Department of Public Instruction, 17 October 1922, in-letter not provided, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁸³ W. F. Bevington, District Inspector, to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Woolloowin, 16 October 1922, in-letter not provided (copy), A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁸⁴ McKenna on visit to the Australasian Conference of Inspectors, 17 October 1922, in-letter not provided, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁸⁵ William Taylor, District Inspector, to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 14 October 1922, in-letter not provided (copy), A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

children from ordinary schools and placing them in special schools, based on their results in the Binet-Simon IQ tests.⁸⁶

Intelligence testing had strong links to eugenics and ideas of racial fitness.⁸⁷ These tests were popular in Britain, Europe and America in the early 1900s, and this popularity spread to Australia.⁸⁸ Children, inmates of child welfare institutions, and criminals were all tested. It is possible that these tests developed partly as a response to difficulties which even staunch eugenicists admitted in differentiating between the fit and unfit.⁸⁹ Psychological tools, incorporating IQ tests, craniometry and anthropometry, were to be utilised to diagnose feeble-minded children with the aim of segregating them and preventing them from breeding.⁹⁰

Many Imperial Education Conferences included topics on mentally "defective" children and intelligence testing.⁹¹ In 1921, the topics

⁸⁶ Taylor to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 14 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives. In 1905, Alfred Binet developed the first "usable" intelligence test, in order to distinguish those children who were "backward" due to environmental factors from those with a congenital intellectual impairment (Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 133). In 1916, Lewis Terman, a psychologist at Stanford University who was associated with the eugenics movement, developed a revised version of this test (Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 79). See also Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial justice: women, prisons and social control* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), p. 68.

⁸⁷ Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the rat was white: a historical view of psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 84-5; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 88-9.

⁸⁸ Garton, "Sound minds and healthy bodies", p. 172.

⁸⁹ Horwitz, "Always with us", pp. 322, 332.

⁹⁰ Kirk and Twigg, "Regulating Australian bodies", p. 24; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 322.

⁹¹ Cecil Andrews, Director of Education, Perth to B. J. McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 30 September 1924, in-letter 252 of 1924; W. F. Bevington, District Inspector, to the Under Secretary, Department of Public

included the increasing use of Binet tests to estimate the mental age of pupils, and “more particularly retarded pupils”.⁹² At a 1921 inspectors’ conference, Mr Akeroyd, an inspector from Victoria, spoke on the Leland Stanford revision of the Binet Tests, the only paper which contained new information.⁹³ Akeroyd stated that Terman’s “Measurement of Intelligence” gave a full explanation of and guide for the Stanford Revision and extension of the Binet-Simon Intelligence scale.⁹⁴ The treatment of “backward” children was a major topic of informal discussion at this conference.⁹⁵ Most of this conversation focused on bringing children who were retarded due to environmental factors, such as late commencement of schooling, up to their class level. Intelligence testing declined in popularity during the 1930s, but was revived by the 1950s.⁹⁶

In his report for 1924, L. D. Edwards, the Under Secretary of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction, stated that many teachers in the state were using Binet tests, revised by Terman, to gauge students’

Instruction, Woolloowin, 16 October 1922, in-letter not provided, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

⁹² B. McKenna, District Inspector, Report on Australian Conference of Inspectors held in Sydney on September 27th and 30th, 1921, in-letter 51263 of 1921, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

⁹³ W. Earnshaw, Eagle Junction to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, p. 3, 17 October 1921, in-letter 51263, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁹⁴ Earnshaw to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, p. 4, 17 October 1921, in-letter 51263, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁹⁵ Earnshaw to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, p. 5, 17 October 1921, in-letter 51263, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

⁹⁶ Swan, *From segregation to integration*, p. 169.

intellectual capacity.⁹⁷ Edwards cautioned that the results of these tests should not be considered conclusive, but continued that the results had largely conformed with the teachers' already formed opinions of the students' capacity.⁹⁸ The value of the tests, according to Edwards, was in establishing a scientific basis for these opinions, although he reminded teachers that their job was to educate children to the best of their ability, regardless of mental capacity.⁹⁹

During the 1922 inspectors' conference, McKenna, Taylor and Bevington also visited a special school, which Taylor described as "very sad", although the teachers, according to Taylor, had "the right missionary spirit and devotion".¹⁰⁰ The school did not attempt to "improve" the children, but merely to place them among "equals" where they felt happier. Although this was better than taking no action, he felt that it did not "solve the question of the future of these children so feebly equipped for life's battles."¹⁰¹ Great care was taken by the teachers to avoid the terms "mentally deficient" and "feeble-minded". Taylor stated that he had left the school convinced of the need for undertaking similar work in Queensland schools, adding that the "important problem of

⁹⁷ L. D. Edwards, Appendix A in "Forty-ninth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1924", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 764.

⁹⁸ Edwards, Appendix A, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 764.

⁹⁹ In the same year, Deniss, the District Inspector for Maryborough, criticised a too strict adherence to the results of intelligence tests (Appendix B, from Denniss's report, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 791).

¹⁰⁰ Taylor to Department of Public Instruction, 14 October 1922, in-letter not provided, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰¹ Taylor to Department of Public Instruction, 14 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

preventing the multiplication of the defective population is thus also in a measure dealt with by segregation.”¹⁰² Taylor’s argument thus explicitly encompassed the eugenic notion that mentally defective children should be segregated in part to prevent their reproduction, rather than simply to facilitate treatment and control.

Taylor continued that all the Queensland representatives to the conference believed that legislation on the problem was needed, and that the segregation of these children which was currently taking place in Victoria was of incalculable benefit to the state. He then raised the issue of the cost to the state, constantly referred to in relation to discussions about the mentally “defective”, arguing that:

These defective children are in the State, and even if they were neglected would ultimately become a charge upon the State on account of ineffectiveness, poverty and probably crime.¹⁰³

He concluded that “humane” care at the present time would ultimately cost less than neglect. This displays once again the tendency to focus on the financial burden of caring for mentally defective people.¹⁰⁴ Of course, finances were a necessary consideration in deciding on a course of action was in terms of educating children. It is worth noting, however, that

¹⁰² Taylor to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 14 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰³ Taylor to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 14 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 126; Michel Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 46-9; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 72-3, 131-32.

Taylor's argument was similar to those who urged that ultimately it would be more expensive to neglect mental "defectives", as they would inevitably become a burden on the state through hopelessness, crime or fecundity, or all three.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Taylor made an explicit link between mental "deficiency" and crime.

Bevington's report revealed even more explicitly a complex mixture of genuine concern for mentally "defective" children, practical concerns about their behaviour, and anxieties about their potential threat to racial fitness. First, he stated that the visit had made the Queensland representatives

... feel the need for an increased effort to place education on a still higher plane, and to give to the children under our care all that is necessary in order to make them good citizens, and so to fit them to take their parts in the development of Australia.¹⁰⁶

Bevington stated that the children at the special school had appeared to be "contented and happy".¹⁰⁷ He argued that it was obvious that such children could be better educated "through the hand than through the

¹⁰⁵ Cawte, "Craniometry and eugenics in Australia", p. 40; Garton, "Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales", p. 26, and *Medicine and madness: a social history of medicine in New South Wales, 1880-1940* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1988), p. 78; Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Introduction", in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 5-6, and *Creating born criminals* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 7. See, for example, Edgar Schuster, *Eugenics* (London and Glasgow, Collins, 1912), pp. 172-73.

¹⁰⁶ Bevington to Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, in-letter not provided, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

purely intellectual appeal", reflecting the common view that manual training was the only education that could be provided for these children.¹⁰⁸ According to Bevington, the most important aspect of these schools was that the children were "taken away from children of high mentality and so are guarded from the depressing contrast between their own feebler abilities and the brisk mentality of the more fortunate."¹⁰⁹ His one criticism of the school was that it was "badly graded", which meant that children who were only slightly below normal were associating with others of very low mentality, which would, he believed, lead to a deterioration in the mentality of the first class of children. Once again, there was a close association between a concern for these children and a belief that they were dangerous.

Bevington identified mentally "defective" children as a major problem for educators.¹¹⁰ He quoted the estimate of Dr Lorna Hodginkson, from the New South Wales Health Department, that approximately one in two hundred children would never possess sufficient mental capacity to function in society, pointing out that if these estimates were accurate, "Brisbane would have about 3150 cases including 1050 of the more

¹⁰⁸ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives. See also Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 506.

¹⁰⁹ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁰ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

serious kind.”¹¹¹ These figures, combined with the fact that Queensland was the only state in Australia which was yet to implement provisions to deal with these children, led Bevington to urge the government that action be taken immediately, adopting the definitions of various grades of mental “deficiency” outlined by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of London.¹¹² These sentiments were similar to those of overseas eugenicists,¹¹³ but also appeared to relate to a preoccupation with usefulness which was characteristic of Queensland society.¹¹⁴

Bevington’s suggestions for the direction in which this action should proceed further illustrated his belief that mentally “defective” children represented a danger to other children, as well as the contemporary obsession with the classification of mental status.¹¹⁵ He argued that “a well-marked line must be made” between those children who were merely below average and those who were incurable idiots.¹¹⁶ Queensland,

¹¹¹ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives. Hodgkinson trained at Harvard; Roe states that she “stressed, perhaps exaggerated, the extent of retardation among New South Wales children” (*Nine Australian progressives*, pp. 176-76).

¹¹² Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives. For these definitions see “Care of the feeble-minded: definitions of defectives”, *The Times* (London), 22 November 1912, p. 4; David Barker, “The biology of stupidity: genetics, eugenics and mental deficiency in the inter-war years”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 22, (1989), p. 349; Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 4; Edward J. Larson, “The rhetoric of eugenics: expert authority and the Mental Deficiency Bill”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 24, 80 (1991), p. 54.

¹¹³ “The feeble-minded”, *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, pp. 75-6, 94-5; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, pp. 439, 457.

¹¹⁵ Jan Goldstein, *Console and classify: the French psychiatric profession in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 5, 321; Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, pp. 221-22, 224, 227.

¹¹⁶ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

according to Bevington, could easily begin helping the first class, without great cost to the state, and with incalculable benefits; he suggested several initial steps. The first was to ascertain the “numbers and particulars” of sub-normal children in Brisbane schools, and to have them examined, including IQ tests. Classes could be arranged for the higher grades at a few schools. Bevington dismissed any suggestions that this would lead to the children being ridiculed by their peers. The care of the lower grades, however, was much more difficult. It was important to be very careful in classification,

... for these children need to be segregated, and for the sake of society generally these children must not be allowed to return. Girls in the adolescent stage need special care. It has been found that the more mentally defective girls are the more susceptible are they to the attentions of men, and the more easily do they fall a prey to the unscrupulous. Terman says it is this type of girl which supplies the bulk of the prostitutes.¹¹⁷

Thus, Bevington now made an explicit link between mental deficiency and the social problem of prostitution. This connection was one often reiterated by eugenicists, and had the added effect of equating mental deficiency with sexual degeneracy. Although he did not state this, he clearly considered the reproduction of these people as something to be avoided. Later, he made this more explicit, and also drew a link between mental “deficiency” and crime, stating that:

¹¹⁷ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

Unfortunate girls of this class generally leave illegitimate children to be brought up by the State, and feeble-minded men and women seem unable to resist their criminal propensities, and consequently find their way into gaols. Again, if the feeble-minded be prevented from propagating the increase in persons of weak intellect will be stemmed.¹¹⁸

Bevington suggested that two homes, one for girls and one for boys, be established as soon as possible.¹¹⁹ The children should be given manual training, "so that when they reach the adult stage they will be able to do a little at any rate for the upkeep of the institutions."¹²⁰ In the conclusion of this report, he again combined humanitarian and financial motives with concerns about racial fitness. He stated that such a scheme would help these "unfortunates", and "that their lives would be brighter and happier than if they were free, and that their parents would be glad to know that they were carefully guarded."¹²¹ He argued that the initial cost of the undertaking would eventually be balanced by the savings to the government in supporting these children who, when adults, would inevitably become either criminals or destitute.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹⁹ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹²⁰ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹²¹ Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹²² Bevington to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 16 October 1922, A/20869, Queensland State Archives. Bevington's statements were similar to international commentary on the subject. See, for example, "Feeble-minded children who drift into crime", *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14; "Feeble-minded children", *The Times* (London), 10 May 1912, p. 4; "The feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4.

In 1923, the first Queensland “opportunity” school, or school for backward children, was established at South Brisbane.¹²³ Over the next few years, others were established at Petrie Terrace, Fortitude Valley, New Farm, Leichhardt St, Buranda, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Townsville.¹²⁴ In 1926, these classes were renamed “opportunity schools”.¹²⁵ It was not compulsory for children to attend these schools; Inspectors made recommendations, but parental authority was needed to remove children from ordinary schools.¹²⁶ The classes were divided into Grade A and Grade B. The children in Grade A schools were selected from ordinary schools, and were children who, due to ill-health, lack of opportunity, physical deformity, or below average mentality were unable to keep up with their classmates and consequently needed special attention.¹²⁷ The objective of these schools was to raise the children’s educational standard and send them back to their old schools. Only those who could not improve would remain, because it was believed to be cruel to force them to compete with their mental superiors.¹²⁸ Grade B schools contained only boys, “the difficulty of transporting girls of low

¹²³ Appendix B, from Bevington’s report, in “Fifty-eighth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1933”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 742; Holthouse, *Looking back*, p. 178.

¹²⁴ Appendix B, from Bevington’s report, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 742; L. G. Holmes, Murgon to Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 12 September 1929, in-letter 49566 of 1929; B. McKenna, Director of Education to Holmes, in-letter 49566 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹²⁵ Holthouse, *Looking back*, p. 178.

¹²⁶ Holthouse, *Looking back*, p. 179.

¹²⁷ Appendix B, from Bevington’s report, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 860.

¹²⁸ T. Wilson, “Forty-ninth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1924”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 730. Wilson estimated that almost fifty percent of children placed in opportunity classes in 1924 had improved enough to return to ordinary schools.

mentality to and from a centre having proved a serious obstacle in trying to help members of that sex.”¹²⁹ Bevington did not explain what the difficulty had been, although it is possible that he was referring to problems of controlling these girls.¹³⁰ The boys in Grade B schools were of weak intellect; they received primarily manual training. In 1925, T. Wilson, the Secretary for Public Instruction, stated that the results of the manual instruction illustrated that “the instructors *have* succeeded in ‘educating’ such limited powers, physical and mental, as have been latent in these naturally undeveloped children.”¹³¹ There was prejudice against opportunity classes among teachers. Some threatened lazy children with being sent to a special class, and many used them as a “dumping ground” for children with behavioural problems.¹³²

A request from 1929 for a child to be sent to opportunity classes reveals attitudes in Queensland towards both the classes, and the children enrolled in them. In March of this year, an H. J. Hart wrote to the Department of Public Instruction, stating that he had a twelve-year-old daughter who had received no education “as she is not a normal

¹²⁹ Appendix B, from Bevington’s report, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 860.

¹³⁰ As has been noted, concerns about mentally “defective” girls often focused on the idea that their sexual behaviour was particularly problematic, and needed to be strictly controlled. See, for example, H. E. Martin, Head Teacher, Fortitude Valley School for Boys to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 17 June 1929, in-letter 32566 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹³¹ T. Wilson, “Forty-ninth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 730.

¹³² Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 15. Grade B classes were particularly badly managed (Swan, *From segregation to integration*, p. 163).

child.”¹³³ The family had only moved to the city recently (there were no special schools in the country), and Hart wanted to know if there were special schools in Brisbane. McKenna replied that the department had established special classes for backward children, but that the girl had to be interviewed before she could be admitted to these classes.¹³⁴ Bevington was sent to interview the girl and her family. Although he did not speak to the girl herself, he recommended her admission to special classes on the basis of his interview with the girl’s mother.¹³⁵

This evidence suggests that the tests involved in determining backwardness were not particularly stringent, as Bevington did not interview the girl herself before determining that she should be admitted to special classes. This is also suggested by further correspondence later in the same year. Ethel Pitt, a visiting medical officer, wrote to the Department of Public Instruction, recommending a boy for opportunity classes because he had “some very degenerate habits – such as spitting suddenly in the faces of his companions while in class.”¹³⁶ In another memorandum, Pitt recommended a boy who was, she said, “decidedly subnormal and will do no good at a normal school”, but with “proper

¹³³ H. J. Hart, Brisbane to Department of Public Instruction, 25 March 1929, in-letter 15164 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁴ B. McKenna, Director of Education to Hart, 3 April 1929, out-letter 15164 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁵ Bevington to Department of Public Instruction, 16 April 1929, in-letter 20222 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁶ Memorandum from Ethel Pitt, Department of Public Instruction to Dr St Vincent Welch, Chief Medical Officer, 12 September 1928, in-letter 43957 of 1928, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

training” would “prove a useful citizen”.¹³⁷ In the same year, Pitt examined the children at the Leichhardt Street Opportunity Class, and described them in her report as being “without exception, obedient, clean and happy, although some are of very low mental development and must have presented a very difficult task.”¹³⁸

Issues relating to mentally “defective” children, including intelligence testing, remained common subjects for discussion at conferences for Directors of Education into the 1920s. Classification, identification through testing, and segregation of these children were the most frequently discussed issues.¹³⁹ In 1924, the Queensland Department of Public Instruction requested discussion on the issues of the payment of teachers organising classes and schools for mental defectives.¹⁴⁰ In 1925, the Royal Commission on Health recommended that a Director of a Division of Child Welfare be appointed to investigate the health

¹³⁷ Memorandum from Pitt to Welch, 22 September 1928, in-letter 45956 of 1928, A/16032, Queensland State Archives. See also Ethel Pitt to the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Public Instruction, 31 October 1929, in-letter 58806 of 1929; Holmes to Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, 12 September 1929, in-letter 49566 of 1929; McKenna, Director of Education to Holmes in-letter 49566 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁸ Memorandum from Pitt, Medical Officer to the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Public Instruction, 16 April 1929, in-letter 20041 of 1929, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁹ W. Matthews, Secretary, Board of Education, London to McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, Imperial Education Conference June 1923: suggested agenda, 12 December 1922, in-letter 3142 of 1923; Cecil Andrews, Director of Education, Perth to McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 30 September 1924, in-letter 252 of 1924, TR1356/3; Report of the annual conference of district inspectors of schools, held on 24th and 25th January 1927, no date, in-letter not provided, A/20869, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁴⁰ McKenna, Director, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane to Andrews, Director of Education, Perth, 19 September 1924, in-letter 252 of 1924, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

conditions of children, focusing on mental hygiene.¹⁴¹ The 1928 session of the Federal Health Council passed a resolution that an inquiry should be made into mental deficiency in Australia, and in 1929 the report of this inquiry was published. W. Ernest Jones, the author of the report, did not claim it was an absolutely accurate census, but he believed it provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that action was needed. The report focused on both educational and institutional aspects of mental deficiency, with the first part being carried out by state education departments.

The survey for state schools was sent to the state *Education Gazettes*, accompanied by instructions.¹⁴² Archbishop Duhig sanctioned Queensland Catholic schools to reply, thus helping Jones gain results for these schools.¹⁴³ No returns were received from any non-Catholic private schools in Queensland, which was typical of the national survey.¹⁴⁴ Overall, returns were received from 1447 state schools in Queensland, which was almost eighty-three percent of the total, and referred to 115 306 children. Returns were received for 2641 children in eighteen convent schools, which was around ten percent of the average attendance and nine percent of the number of private schools. The

¹⁴¹ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 3.

¹⁴² Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 5; Jones, "The master potter and the rejected pots", p. 333.

¹⁴³ "Mental deficiency return to be forwarded", *Education Office Gazette, Queensland*, 31, 1 (1929), p. 9. Archbishops in New South Wales and Victoria also sanctioned replies to the survey (Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 5).

¹⁴⁴ Victoria and South Australia were the only states where results were returned from non-Catholic private schools (Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, p. 5).

Commonwealth report recommended that psychological clinics should be established in each state to examine mentally defective children and young adults, and that opportunity classes should continue.¹⁴⁵

The statement which accompanied the form began with a "preliminary description of mental deficiency" which revealed a great deal about contemporary perceptions of this subject.¹⁴⁶ This description stated that if, when compared to others of the same age and similar opportunities, "a given individual is markedly lacking in ability to conduct his affairs efficiently", this individual was probably mentally deficient.¹⁴⁷ The condition could also be indicated by a lack of ability in intellectual tasks, an inability to profit by experience, a lack of the capacity to plan ahead, or to assume responsibility, or to meet new situations in an intelligent way.¹⁴⁸ It was stressed that a distinction should be made between mental deficiency and other mental abnormalities.¹⁴⁹ In other words, it was important to distinguish mental deficiency from insanity. The differences were listed as follows: mental defectives were usually emotionally stable, while the insane were delusional, paranoid and eccentric; the insane were often capable of intellectual achievement, and usually developed normally during childhood, while mental defectives typically displayed "marked slowness in development from birth"; the insane appeared

¹⁴⁵ Jones, *Report on mental deficiency*, pp. 10, 16.

¹⁴⁶ "Mental deficiency return to be forwarded", p. 10.

¹⁴⁷ "Mental deficiency return to be forwarded", p. 10.

¹⁴⁸ "Mental deficiency return to be forwarded", p. 10.

¹⁴⁹ "Mental deficiency return to be forwarded", p. 10.

normal at times, while mental defectives were always subnormal.¹⁵⁰ The distinction between the insane and mental “defectives” was becoming common at this time, although it was still relatively new in Queensland.¹⁵¹

The article went on to state that the grades of mental deficiency were arbitrary to some extent, as there was no definite gap between normal and subnormal mentality.¹⁵² This seemed to be referring to the difficulty of classifying borderline cases. Intelligence testing was considered the most reliable indicator of mental deficiency, while appearance was considered the least reliable. Despite this, it was stated that mental defectives were “definitely retarded in their mastery of the forms of behaviour and control common to human beings”.¹⁵³ In higher cases, mental defect was sometimes undetectable in ordinary conversation; sometimes mental defectives showed “good and even remarkable powers of rote memory”, and sometimes they displayed “marked manual ability”.¹⁵⁴ This description of these children, although it reveals no evidence of concerns about racial fitness, treats them as slightly less than human.

¹⁵⁰ “Mental deficiency return to be forwarded”, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, pp. 127-29.

¹⁵² “Mental deficiency return to be forwarded”, p. 10.

¹⁵³ “Mental deficiency return to be forwarded”, p. 10.

¹⁵⁴ “Mental deficiency return to be forwarded”, p. 10.

By the late 1920s, discussion of mentally defective children in Queensland had increased, and the sentiments expressed towards these children were becoming more negative. In 1929, Geoffrey Ferguson, the Director of the State Children Department, criticised parents of physically or mentally deficient children who requested that the department remove their children.¹⁵⁵ Ferguson stated that it was not the department's job to look after such children, and that these parents were neglecting their duty.¹⁵⁶ In the same year, Ferguson included the report of the superintendent of the farm home for boys at Westbrook, T. Jones. Jones stated that "The feeble-minded are still with us in fair numbers", as was proved by a test carried out in that year by an inspector for the Department of Public Instruction.¹⁵⁷ Only eleven percent of the eighty-five boys who took the test passed.¹⁵⁸ The boys were not normal, despite the fact that some appeared to be. Jones stated that many were "hopeless", and that "sexual vice" was prevalent.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Geoffrey A. Ferguson, "Annual report of the Director State Children Department for the year 1929", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1061.

¹⁵⁶ For a similar complaint, see correspondence from Ferguson to Welch, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Public Instruction, 27 September 1928, in-letter 46269 of 1928, A/16032, Queensland State Archives. Ferguson stated that the State Children Department experienced a great deal of difficulty in dealing with backward children, and that there was often difficulty in placing them. He continued that foster mothers could not "be expected to take every objectionable child that comes into our hands".

¹⁵⁷ Report of T. Jones, superintendent of the Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook, in Ferguson, "Annual report of the Director State Children Department for the year 1929", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1063.

¹⁵⁸ The inspector conducting the tests found the boys very cunning, but Jones stated that although this might be confused for intelligence, it was not the same (Jones in *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1063).

¹⁵⁹ Jones in *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1063.

Despite these severe views, Jones was not pessimistic about the chances of improving these children. He argued that both environment and heredity were responsible for their condition, and suggested that much blame could be attributed to their parents.¹⁶⁰ Jones claimed that “degeneration is forced upon the unborn child by heredity”, but continued, “be heredity what it may, environment has the power to save or damn.”¹⁶¹ He did argue, however, that because his work only commenced after both environment and heredity had taken hold, it was particularly difficult. Although they could not modify heredity, they did change the environment and thus gave the boys a chance. Jones also praised the value of physical culture for the boys, claiming that it had physical, mental and moral benefits.¹⁶²

An increase in concerns about mentally “defective” children at this time may have been due to increasing numbers of children in opportunity classes and institutions. In 1933, Bevington wrote to the Director of Education, stating that since the Opportunity School had been established at South, every year “certain children have been so far below normal in mentality that it has not been possible to get them out at the end of the year.”¹⁶³ Bevington’s report of inspection showed that twenty-six of the children had been there for more than two years, while ten had

¹⁶⁰ Jones in *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1065.

¹⁶¹ Ferguson, “Annual report”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1066.

¹⁶² Jones in *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1930), p. 1065.

¹⁶³ Bevington, District Inspector to Director of Education, 10 November 1933, in-letter 48811 of 1933, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

been there for four years. He believed that the solution was to provide an additional teacher for the class, and erect a partition in the class room, thus enabling them to accommodate more students. In 1934, he approved a request for a partition in the South Brisbane School opportunity classes so that the worst (or best) cases could be isolated and treated separately, thus enabling teachers to grade the pupils.¹⁶⁴

In 1934, H. Clarke stated that sub-normal and imbecile children were a difficult problem for the department of state children.¹⁶⁵ Clarke believed firmly that they should not be allowed to associate in the same institutions with “normal” children, as this association was to the detriment of the latter group. He believed it was becoming increasingly urgent to provide separate accommodation for “sub-normal” children. These statements reveal that a focus on classification and segregation was very much in evidence during the 1930s, and that mentally “defective” children were still considered a threat to other children, although the precise nature of this threat remained vague. Bevington supervised the development of opportunity schools between 1923 and 1935.¹⁶⁶ He was described in an official history of the Queensland Education Department as “a man of unusual insight and compassion”.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Bevington, District Inspector to the Director, Education Department, 14 April 1934, in-letter 16368 of 1934, A/16032, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁵ H. Clarke, “Annual report of the Director State Children Department for the year 1934”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 971. See also Ferguson, “Annual report of the Director State Children Department for the year 1924”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1079.

¹⁶⁶ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ Holthouse, *Looking back*, p. 178.

The provision of opportunity classes for “backward” children was doubtless an improvement on a previous system under which they had been almost entirely neglected. Nevertheless, an analysis of Bevington’s views reveals equal concern with the segregation of such children from “normal” children in order to safeguard racial fitness.

In spite of increased provisions for mentally “defective” children in Queensland in the 1920s, anxiety about the growing numbers of such children in Queensland continued. This anxiety was seen most clearly in the provisions of the *Backward Persons Act* of 1938 which related to children.¹⁶⁸ Any person in charge of children was required to report any backward children over the age of six years to the Director of Mental Hygiene, or earlier where the condition was apparent. The Director was then required to examine the child and report the result to the Director-General of Health and Medical Services, who had the power to have the child removed to an institution. The compulsory notification of backward children was officially intended to help the children. Hanlon argued that nothing could be done for them until exact numbers were known, a difficulty which, he said, had been encountered all over the world “where similar legislation had been undertaken”.¹⁶⁹ He emphasised that many backward children would benefit from special education and vocational training. In his notes, he argued that these children were unable to

¹⁶⁸ *Backward Persons Act* of 1938, 2 Geo. 6 no. 30, s. 9.

¹⁶⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), pp. 1726-27.

compete with normal persons for employment, and thus usually became permanently unemployed, or, in other words, an economic loss to the state.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, if vocational training was supplied, most backward persons could become “productive economic unit[s] of the community”.¹⁷¹ In his speech, he argued that training was essential, because it would enable at least some backward youths to find “productive work”, and “to do something useful for society instead of being a burden on it.”¹⁷² This focus on the unproductive nature of such people and the consequent economic loss to the community which they represented is a constant refrain in eugenic propaganda and reveals the government’s motives, beyond the constant reiteration of humanitarian rhetoric.

Hanlon stated that it was the government’s intention to target children particularly. One of the only actions which was to be taken immediately as a result of the legislation was to appoint a board to collect information about the number of children available for treatment, as well as their “various degrees of their backwardness.”¹⁷³ Hanlon stated that the government was “aiming to reach young people particularly”.¹⁷⁴ During the debate in parliament over the legislation, Edward Maher, the leader of the opposition Country Party stated that backward children should not

¹⁷⁰ Backward Persons Bill 1938, p. 3, A/27293, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷¹ Backward Persons Bill 1938, p. 4, A/27293, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁷² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1726.

¹⁷³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1726.

¹⁷⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1726.

be removed from their parents.¹⁷⁵ Although he began by arguing that removing children from their parents was a serious matter, which would probably do more harm than good to the children themselves, he quickly moved to the consideration of the expense to the rest of the community. He argued that if backward children were removed to an institution, “much expense may be charged to the State quite unnecessarily.”¹⁷⁶ Arthur Moore believed that the investigation of the incidence of backwardness in the state was absolutely crucial, particularly in the country, where the families tended to be larger, “and the number of backward children are extraordinarily great.”¹⁷⁷ He went on to point out the “waste” of resources spent on looking after such people, and argued that they were a danger to the “normal children” with whom they came into contact.¹⁷⁸ Randolph Bedford, the member for Warrego, expressed his approval of the bill, calling it “a commendable attempt to do something for the backward children”, continuing, “the euphemism [backward] says something for the kindness of heart of the Minister.”¹⁷⁹ Despite Bedford’s use of humanitarian language, he described the numbers of backward children in schools as an “evil” which would become permanent if nothing was done.¹⁸⁰ Bedford, Maher and Moore all supported sterilisation for mentally “unfit” adults. As was seen in Chapter Three, the implementation of provisions of this act was slow,

¹⁷⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1798.

¹⁷⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1798.

¹⁷⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1798.

¹⁷⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1801.

¹⁷⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1799.

¹⁸⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 173 (1938), p. 1799.

and many were never implemented at all.¹⁸¹ The attempt to establish a farm for backward youths at Dalby failed due to the requisitioning of the buildings for the war effort.¹⁸² In 1948 a Research and Guidance Branch was established, initially focused mainly on developing tests.¹⁸³

Between 1941 and 1944, Dr Flora Innes of the Kenny Clinic in Brisbane carried out controversial research into the treatment of children with both physical and mental handicaps.¹⁸⁴ Innes's methods came under investigation after a child died in her care. One of the problems was her failure to provide a full report of her methods. It is clear, however, that she was undertaking experimental dietary research, including the prohibition of milk, on "backward" children. Innes carried out clinical surveys at Dalby Training Farm, Silky Oaks and Sandy Gallop on mentally defective children, which included not only "backward" children, but also those with hearing defects and cerebral palsy.¹⁸⁵ Innes claimed that her surveys "revealed conditions of great scientific importance", and that she was "offering to Queensland a piece of

¹⁸¹ Basil Stafford, Director-General of Mental Hygiene to Home Secretary, p. 6, 8 February 1941, in-letter not provided; Report of Acting Director of Mental Hygiene, p. 1, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31797, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸² Report of Acting Director of Mental Hygiene, p. 5, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31797; Report of the Director of Mental Hygiene, showing the progress in the mental hygiene service during recent years and plans for the future, no date, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives; Ross Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1987), p. 132.

¹⁸³ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁴ Correspondence records respecting treatment of mentally retarded children by Dr. Flora Innes at the Kenny Clinic, Brisbane, 1941-1944, in-letter not provided, HHA/7, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁵ Innes's report, 22 December 1941, in-letter not provided, HHA/7, Queensland State Archives.

advanced scientific work” which was extremely important and would “restor[e] to usefulness many who are otherwise doomed to the life of the vegetable at the expense of the State, or continually feeding the ranks of the delinquents or criminals.”¹⁸⁶ This statement revealed the persistence of the idea that mental “defectives” would inevitably become a burden on the state. Innes’s views on mental “deficiency” were controversial, and were not shared by other psychiatrists. She was not popular with the government either.¹⁸⁷ In 1949, the Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill invited her to give a lecture, suggesting that her views were more respected outside the medical profession.¹⁸⁸

Bevington became the Acting Chief Inspector of Schools in 1935, and his duties as supervisor of opportunity schools were divided among seven inspectors.¹⁸⁹ In fact, a 1950 report stated that special classes in Queensland were “the worst in Australia”.¹⁹⁰ Thus, even by 1950, mentally “defective” children were still largely neglected, and any suggestions for their treatment continued to focus on their segregation from “normal” children. The noticeable change after the 1930s was that rhetoric advocating such segregation increasingly focused on the welfare

¹⁸⁶ Innes’s report, 22 December 1941, in-letter not provided, HHA/7, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁷ 10 December 1941, in-letter not provided, HHA/7, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁸ Circular from Australian Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (Queensland), 14 April 1949, in-letter 2275 of 1949, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁸⁹ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, pp. 15-16; these inspectors were not, according to Logan and Clarke, as knowledgeable or as concerned as Bevington.

¹⁹⁰ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 16.

of the children. Concerns for racial fitness and the physical danger posed by such children to “normal” children were much less prominent in debates during and after the 1940s. Nevertheless, throughout the period from 1900 to 1950, similar strategies were encouraged for the treatment of “backward” children. If environmental factors were considered to be the cause of “backwardness”, children were to be helped to regain their rightful academic place, while if “backwardness” was determined to be innate, they were to be segregated.¹⁹¹

“Problem” children

During the first half of the twentieth century, the manipulation of environment was considered extremely important in dealing with “problem” children. Between 1890 and 1915, there was a considerable expansion of state involvement in the socialisation of children.¹⁹² Margaret Barbalet contends that it was hoped that by providing a “good” home environment for state children, a class of dependent and criminal poor would be eliminated or prevented.¹⁹³ Tony Austin argues that in the first half of the twentieth century, pretexts for removing children from their families proliferated, and many children were committed to state

¹⁹¹ McKenna, District Inspector, Report on Australian Conference of Inspectors held in Sydney on September 27th and 30th, 1921, in-letter 51263 of 1921, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives; Phyllis D. Cilento, *Enjoy your family: a guide for parenthood* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1964), pp. 270-71.

¹⁹² Robert van Krieken, *Children and the state: social control and the formation of Australian child welfare* (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), p. 84.

¹⁹³ Barbalet, *Far from a low gutter girl*, p. 191. See also Rafter, *Partial justice*, pp. 28, 33-5, 40.

care.¹⁹⁴ The lives of neglected children and juvenile offenders were severely controlled by the state.¹⁹⁵ These attitudes were reflected in the views of the *Week*, which stated in 1910 that 3000 children were currently under state control, and that "the greater number by far will become useful citizens because of the influence of the officers of the department. ... State supervision is a great factor in maintaining discipline."¹⁹⁶ This is not to suggest that hereditarian views held no place in the debate about state children and juvenile delinquents, as many solutions were promoted as beneficial from both an environmental and a hereditarian point of view.¹⁹⁷

In New South Wales, Charles Mackellar lobbied to have mental tests carried out by a psychiatrist on juvenile offenders brought before the Children's Court.¹⁹⁸ This followed overseas models and reflected the growing influence of psychiatry in the area of juvenile delinquency.¹⁹⁹ In 1910, the *Queenslander* discussed some of the offences that were seen before the Children's Court in Queensland, including "gross immorality"

¹⁹⁴ Austin, "Cecil Cook, scientific thought and 'Half-castes'", p. 110.

¹⁹⁵ Evans and Parry, "Vessels of progressivism?", p. 322; van Krieken, *Children and the state*, pp. 91-6.

¹⁹⁶ "State children", *Week* (Brisbane), 18 February 1910, p. 19.

¹⁹⁷ Barbalet also acknowledges this, stating that in addition to providing environmental influences, it was hoped the boarding out system would decrease the propagation of the pauper class (*Far from a low gutter girl*, p. 191). See also Berreen, "Illegitimacy and 'feeble-mindedness'", p. 220; Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating born criminals* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 7.

¹⁹⁸ Garton, "Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales", p. 33.

¹⁹⁹ In 1910, the *Queenslander* reported that philanthropists in New York were attempting to raise £200, 000 in order to construct a hospital as an adjunct to the Children's Court, in order to treat "degenerate children" (*Queenslander* (Brisbane), 26 February 1910, p. 13). See also "Feeble-minded children who drift into crime", *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14.

and “a disregard for chastity”, both of which were considered extremely serious offences.²⁰⁰ In fact, the newspaper stated that it was these offences which constituted “the main difficulties to be faced in dealing with the child life of that section of the community from which are drawn the offenders dealt with in Children’s Courts”.²⁰¹ The specific section of the community referred to by the newspaper was not made explicit, but the parents of these children were pointed out as “being in all cases primarily responsible for the lack of control and moral discipline resulting in the lapse of the child.”²⁰²

More general concerns about the behaviour of children were indicated in an article in the *Week* in 1910, which lamented the fact that “Young folk in Australia seem to be infatuated with the desire to be abroad o’ nights”, according to a recent judgement in a magistrate’s court.²⁰³ The newspaper continued that a “lack of parental control must account for the melancholy fact stated by the judge.”²⁰⁴ It then asked “Of what mental texture and physical constitution will the fathers and mothers of the generations to be, consist?”, thus articulating its concerns in terms of the future of the race rather than the health or well-being of the

²⁰⁰ “Children’s Courts Act: operations declared beneficial”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 January 1910, p. 39.

²⁰¹ “Children’s Courts Act”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 January 1910, p. 39.

²⁰² “Children’s Courts Act”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 January 1910, p. 39. van Krieken asserts that the expansion of psychology and psychiatry in the area of child welfare led to medical and scientific surveillance of working class children (*Children and the state*, p. 104).

²⁰³ *Week* (Brisbane), 4 March 1910, p. 19.

²⁰⁴ *Week* (Brisbane), 4 March 1910, p. 19.

present generation.²⁰⁵ These concerns were not confined to the *Week*. In May 1910, the *Queenslander* reported that the National Council of Women was extremely anxious to discuss with the Home Secretary, Appel, a “means of reducing the numbers of young people permitted to roam the streets indiscriminately at night”.²⁰⁶ It is interesting that even at this early stage, fears about children roaming the streets were framed in the context of the effect on subsequent generations, as much as they were fears about social order, thus displaying the influence of concerns about racial fitness.²⁰⁷

A greater focus on hereditary factors in causing problems in the behaviour of children was evident in a 1914 article from the *Queenslander* on criminal feeble-mindedness in girls. This article, however, was a report on an American institution. The article stated that:

There are many differences of opinion among philanthropic women as to the best means of solving the problem how to remake girls mentally and physically. Any one with sympathy for her sex must recognise that there are many who, from home environment, surroundings, lack of parental fitness, have never had a fair chance.²⁰⁸

The article did not focus specifically on heredity as the primary factor in “criminal feeble-mindedness”. Nevertheless, it discussed a new idea being

²⁰⁵ *Week* (Brisbane), 4 March 1910, p. 19.

²⁰⁶ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 May 1910, p. 5.

²⁰⁷ During the second half of the nineteenth century, the range of behaviour considered appropriate for children was narrowed considerably, and one of the main issues was that of children being on the streets at night; this was targeted primarily at working class children (Barbalet, *Far from a low gutter girl*, p. 196).

²⁰⁸ “Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

tried in American and England, namely, “that many of the moral delinquencies of the women who become charges on the community can be remedied by overcoming their physical deficiencies.”²⁰⁹ The article then described a program which was instituted at the New York State Reformatory for Women with the aim of studying this theory.²¹⁰ The author of the article contended that the girls at the reformatory were the victims of “far more than ... environment”.²¹¹ Their problems could be traced to

... causes which will have had their start a century before [they] came into the world. ... This sort of work notably does away with one’s tendency to blame too bitterly the individual for her shortcomings.²¹²

Although this concluding sentence implied sympathy for the girls, it also clearly removed the blame from the state and the family environment, as well as from “the individual”. Instead, heredity was held responsible for criminality.

The investigations also showed the “frequently astonishing” mental incapacity of the girls, revealed by intelligence tests, despite the fact that “upon the surface the girls appear to be normal.”²¹³ The tests showed “a

²⁰⁹ “Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

²¹⁰ The Bedford reformatory was one of the first institutions to apply a medical-scientific approach to reforming criminals, and was extremely influential (Rafter, *Partial justice*, pp. 69-73).

²¹¹ “Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

²¹² “Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

²¹³ “Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

close connection between morals (or the lack of them) and physical perfection (or the lack of it)."²¹⁴ This connection between physical and mental status was further explicated:

The close relation between mind and body is more clearly indicated, and the equally close relation between mind and morals is constantly more surely proved. The sinner is physically abnormal. [Therefore] one of the best ways to remake moral delinquents is to build up the body, and by proper out-of-door life and physical culture reform the social outcast.²¹⁵

This is somewhat in opposition to the previous quote, which blamed hereditary factors for the behaviour of these girls. It reflects the view that "defective" or criminal individuals could be rehabilitated to some degree by physical activity, but only to a certain extent: bad heredity could never be entirely overcome.²¹⁶ This is indicative of the complexity of much hereditarian and eugenic belief at this time, and is similar to beliefs about curable and incurable mentally "unfit" adults. In this instance, environmental influences could effect some change, but it was still argued that the girls should be segregated.²¹⁷

By 1928, there is evidence that hereditary factors were given greater weight in determining causes of problematic behaviour. As has been shown in previous chapters, an increasing focus on heredity was typical

²¹⁴ "Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

²¹⁵ "Criminal feeble-mindedness in girls", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1914, p. 6.

²¹⁶ See also "Feeble-minded children who drift into crime", *New York Times*, 19 February 1911, Part V, p. 14.

²¹⁷ The original aim of the institution was to categorise and separate "reformable" girls from those whose criminality was hereditary, and who were to receive indefinite sentences (Rafter, *Partial justice*, p. 70).

of discourse in a range of areas in Queensland at this time. In 1928, an Isabella Neal applied to Moorooka Police Station to have her fifteen-year-old daughter admitted to an Epileptics Home.²¹⁸ The girl was illegitimate, and her father's whereabouts were unknown, although the woman's present husband had adopted the girl. Neal reported that the girl had fits, and

although she is able to walk about, she is weak minded, and she threatens to kill her Mother and other children in the family, and she also speaks to the younger children in the family about sexual matters which may lead them to commit some sexual offence.²¹⁹

Neal specifically stated that attempts to prevent her daughter from discussing sexual matters with her younger siblings had failed because of the girl's supposed weak-mindedness. Enclosed with this correspondence was the standard medical report which accompanied all applications for the admission of a child to the Home for Epileptics in Toowoomba. One of the questions on the form asked whether there was any family history of epilepsy, insanity or alcoholism. This conjunction of categories is suggestive of the willingness to attribute a variety of conditions to heredity, despite a lack of clear information on the subject.²²⁰ Although epilepsy is not an inherited condition, it was

²¹⁸ Constable no. 1330, Brisbane District, Moorooka Station to Inspector of Police, Brisbane; forwarded to Medical Superintendent, Home of Epileptics, Toowoomba, 15 December 1928, in-letter 1346 of 1928, A/3500, Queensland State Archives.

²¹⁹ Constable no. 1330 to Inspector of Police; forwarded to Medical Superintendent, Home of Epileptics, 15 December 1928, in-letter 1346 of 1928, A/3500, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁰ Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 123.

believed to be, and was in fact one of the conditions for which eugenicists recommended sterilisation or segregation in order to prevent reproduction.²²¹ In response to this question, the supervising doctor wrote that although the father's history was unknown, he was "stated to be a 'bad egg' and apparently sexually perverted."²²² Another question asked if the child displayed "any mental or moral peculiarities".²²³ The reply was in the affirmative; the doctor claimed that the girl was "easily angered" and discussed menstruation with her younger siblings.²²⁴

The biggest threat posed by this girl was apparently her discussion of inappropriate "sexual matters". This euphemistic phrase is revealed by the doctor's report to mean that she discussed menstruation with her younger siblings. This threat ties in with general fears of the promiscuity and uncontrolled sexuality of mentally "defectives". At an individual level, the girl's mother was concerned with her daughter's unmanageable behaviour. In both this case, and in the discussion of "criminal feeble-

²²¹ "The Eugenics Congress", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 7; "The feeble-minded: II. – proposed legislation", *The Times* (London), 16 May 1912, p. 6; William Ernest Castle, John Merle Coulter, Charles Benedict Davenport, Edward Murray East and William Lawrence Tower, *Heredity and eugenics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), p. 282. The belief that epilepsy was linked to insanity, and that both conditions were linked to masturbation, persisted in Queensland long after it had been discredited elsewhere (Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 132).

²²² Constable no. 1330 to Inspector of Police; forwarded to Medical Superintendent, Home of Epileptics, 15 December 1928, in-letter 1346 of 1928, A/3500, Queensland State Archives.

²²³ Constable no. 1330 to Inspector of Police; forwarded to Medical Superintendent, Home of Epileptics, 15 December 1928, in-letter 1346 of 1928, A/3500, Queensland State Archives.

²²⁴ Constable no. 1330 to Inspector of Police; forwarded to Medical Superintendent, Home of Epileptics, 15 December 1928, in-letter 1346 of 1928, A/3500, Queensland State Archives.

mind ed girls", it was clear that concerns about epileptics and the "weakminded" were often focused on sexual aspects of their behaviour, and that this was more apparent in discourse relating to girls.²²⁵ Girls were particular targets of progressive and eugenic reform because of their perceived role in the future of the race, and for the same reason these concerns often focused on their sexuality.²²⁶ Mental defectiveness was thus equated with sexual degeneracy.

During the 1930s in Australia, there was growing interest in juvenile delinquency, and also reform of methods of treatment.²²⁷ There was also an increase in systematic testing and the scientific control of state children.²²⁸ The general attitude of those working in the State Children Department in Queensland at this time was that the children were victims of unsavoury home environments.²²⁹ Jones, the superintendent of the Farm Home for Boys at Westbrook, argued in 1935 that the behavioural problems of the boys at the institute could be attributed to a

²²⁵ Foucault argued that it was only during the nineteenth century, when women's bodies assumed a medico-social importance, that adolescent female sexuality came to be targeted in the same way as male (in *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1927-1977*, Colin Gordon, ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 217).

²²⁶ van Krieken, *Children and the state*, p. 93. Evans and Parry argue that under the Tasmanian *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1920, many girls were classified as mentally "defective" as a result of their sexual behaviour ("Vessels of progressivism?", pp. 322, 329-30). For an international example of targeting girls as particular threats in this respect see "The feeble-minded", *The Times* (London), 15 May 1912, p. 4.

²²⁷ Andrew Spau ll, *Australian education in the Second World War* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), p. 109.

²²⁸ van Krieken, *Children and the state*, pp. 119-20.

²²⁹ Ferguson, "Annual report of the Director State Children Department for the year 1924", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 1077. This was not unusual in Australia (Spau ll, *Australian education in the Second World War*, pp. 111-12). See also *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (25 October 1934), p. 992.

lack of discipline and care on the part of their parents.²³⁰ This was in contrast to his views on mental “deficiency”, which he attributed to both environmental and hereditary factors.

From 1940 to 1941, an increase in juvenile delinquency was publicised in Britain, leading to fears that a similar situation would arise in Australia.²³¹ In 1946, the *Courier Mail* reported that juvenile delinquency in America was increasingly being blamed on parents’ behaviour and selfishness.²³² In 1949, Louis Luckins, the member for Maree, described state children as “unfortunate children who have not the normal home life enjoyed by the many thousands of children in Queensland”, thus placing the blame for their behaviour firmly on their home environment.²³³ Adolf Müller, the member for Fassifern, revealed similar views when he argued that the best treatment for delinquents was to remove them to the country and provide them with work, and these sentiments were shared by other parliamentarians.²³⁴

Concerns about juvenile delinquency remained present in Australia until well into the 1950s, and continued to display the influence of eugenic

²³⁰ Report of T. Jones, superintendent of the Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook, in Clarke, “Annual report of the Director State Children Department for the year 1934”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1935), p. 960.

²³¹ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, pp. 108-9.

²³² “Parents blamed for crime in U.S.”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 14 February 1946, p. 1.

²³³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 194 (9 November 1948-49), p. 1252.

²³⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 194 (9 November 1948-49), pp. 1253-55.

ideology and ideas of racial fitness.²³⁵ It seems that generally, debate about juvenile delinquency and “problem” children in Queensland was less likely to focus on hereditary factors than was discussion about mentally “defective” children. Rather, it was believed that environment was the deciding factor for the former group. The belief that early segregation was the best solution to this problem, however, clearly reflected concerns about maintaining social control over certain groups, while the constant reiteration that children were important to the future of the race suggested the prevalence of this idea.

The general emphasis on the efficacy of education was even occasionally apparent in discussion of Aboriginal children, another group identified by authorities as problematic.²³⁶ Attitudes expressed towards Aboriginal children were sometimes different to those expressed towards adults. There was a certain strand of thought that Aboriginal children would be easier to educate than adults.²³⁷ In 1910, the *Queenslander* discussed some “quaint stories of the doings of the child native” from the head of the Aboriginal mission station at the Roper River.²³⁸ The article argued

²³⁵ Bessant, “Described, measured and labelled”, pp. 9–12.

²³⁶ Under the provisions of the *Reformatories Act* of 1865, every child of an Aboriginal mother in Queensland was automatically assumed to be a “neglected” child (Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Under Secretary, Lands Department, 17 May 1904, in-letter 930 of 1904, A/58927, Queensland State Archives). See also Rosalind Kidd, *The way we civilise: Aboriginal Affairs – the untold story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), p. 20; van Krieken, *Children and the state*, p. 96.

²³⁷ “The Northern Territory: are the Aboriginals a curse?”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 January 1912, p. 7; Fiona Paisley, *Loving protection?: Australian feminism and Aboriginal women’s rights 1919–1939* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2000), p. 55.

²³⁸ “The child native”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 May 1910, p. 8.

that children were basically the same, “whether in the bush of ‘Away Back’ or in the school rooms of the South”, and that children’s minds were “constructive”, “either white or black”.²³⁹ The article described one child in particular:

Well developed physically, and mentally alert, a keen observer, and amenable to discipline of the firm, kindly sort, he needs but one thing to render him in a very few years a valuable asset to the Commonwealth. The one thing, so long withheld, is education and hard training.²⁴⁰

In the description of the child, the focus once again returned to the purpose of education, which was to make the child economically valuable to the nation. Sentiments of this type were in fact commonly expressed about white children at this time, as this chapter has shown. Nevertheless, other statements in the article made it clear that Aboriginal children were far from being considered equal to whites.²⁴¹ This attitude was not confined to Aboriginal children. At a national conference of directors of education in 1923, one of the topics was “The special means of educating the deficient non-European races within the Empire with a view to developing their highest usefulness to themselves and to the Empire”; and “Special requirements in the education of Europeans in constant and immediate contact with non-European races”.²⁴²

²³⁹ This was in contrast to the views of some southern eugenicists, for example R. J. A. Berry (Cawte, “Cranio-metry and eugenics in Australia”, p. 51).

²⁴⁰ “The child native”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 May 1910, p. 8.

²⁴¹ Dogs on the station were described as “stray curs (ill-fed animals that rival a blackfellow in appetite)”: *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 May 1910, p. 8.

²⁴² W. Matthews, Secretary, Board of Education, London to B. McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, Imperial Education Conference

In 1931, Bleakley stated that although Aboriginal children displayed “fair aptitude”, their progress was “hampered at times by lack of proper nourishment and the disabilities of the primitive home life.”²⁴³ They had the opportunity to go to secondary school, but their parents usually removed them before this could happen. The children of station-employed Aborigines were generally not given an education, and Bleakley stated that “When it can be done without hardship to the parents, or where the conditions justify a charge of neglect, such children are removed to Settlements or Missions for better care and education.”²⁴⁴ In the case of neglected white children, the Children’s Department preferred to foster them out, rather than institutionalise them. This was not possible with Aboriginal children, according to Bleakley, due to “the great social disabilities under which children of mixed blood labour”.²⁴⁵ Later in the 1930s, he stated that a separate school for “coloured” children had been established at Thursday Island because “certain difficulties” had arisen as a result of their attending schools with white children.²⁴⁶ Thus, while Bleakley may have identified their disabilities as social, the result was that these children were institutionalised, and generally for no

June 1923: suggested agenda, 12 December 1922, in-letter 3142 of 1923, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

²⁴³ J. W. Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of north and central Australia: suggestions towards solving the problem* (Sydney: Association for the Protection of Native Races, 1931), p. 7.

²⁴⁴ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of North and Central Australia*, p. 8.

²⁴⁵ Bleakley, *The half-caste Aborigines of North and Central Australia*, p. 8.

²⁴⁶ Notes for assistance in description of the film – “The Aboriginal Problem in Queensland”, p. 12, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58913 (JWB/VH), Queensland State Archives.

greater reason than for being Aboriginal. When they were not institutionalised, they were closely supervised.²⁴⁷ The general tone of discussions about these children implied that, like mentally “defective” children, their heredity would limit their capacity.

The general emphasis on segregation and environmental factors in dealing with “problem” children of European background may well reflect the fact that in Queensland, class was a less important factor than was “usefulness” to the state.²⁴⁸ It was firmly believed that problem children could, with the right environment, be made into useful citizens, while those with an inherited or congenital intellectual impairment could not. Some Australian commentators saw certain aspects of working class behaviour as being “at the very core of racial degeneracy and social disorder”.²⁴⁹ It seems that this was not a major factor in debate in Queensland, where it was rather those who failed to work who were targeted in such a way. This is suggested by the fact that discourse about “normal” children clearly focused on environmental influences,

²⁴⁷ In the late 1930s, the sub-department of Aboriginal Affairs co-operated with the State Children’s Department to supervise more closely Aboriginal girls in employment as domestic servants (Administrative and legislative actions of the sub-department of Aboriginals during the term of office of the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, MLA, Home Secretary (June 1932 to date), p. 12, no date, in-letter not provided, A/58915 (JWB/FA), Queensland State Archives).

²⁴⁸ Evans, “The hidden colonists”, pp. 18, 76; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 457.

²⁴⁹ Rodwell, “Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement”, p. 147.

although it was influenced to some extent by concerns about racial fitness and improving the race.²⁵⁰

Medical inspections, sex education and physical training

The establishment of school medical inspections in Queensland was influenced by eugenic ideas about future racial fitness, largely through the agency of Dr J. S. C. Elkington, the well-respected Commissioner of Public Health in Queensland from 1909 to 1913, and the main architect of medical inspections in Queensland.²⁵¹ Medical inspection of school children originated in England in the late nineteenth century as a response to concerns over racial fitness resulting from the poor standard of recruits for the Boer War.²⁵² Rodwell argues that school medical services were related to concerns over the fitness of working class children, and that from the inception of inspections, medical officers “were driven by eugenic ideals”.²⁵³ In New South Wales, Charles Mackellar believed that the most pressing area of social reform in Australia was the segregation of mental defectives, and one of the essential components of this strategy was the regular medical inspection of school children.²⁵⁴ This was not a major issue in Queensland, which

²⁵⁰ Rodwell states that during the early 1910s, the Australian press emphasised environmental influences on children (“Curing the precocious masturbator”, p. 85).

²⁵¹ Elkington’s efficiency was praised in parliament (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 106 (27 October 1910), p. 1723).

²⁵² Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 151.

²⁵³ Rodwell, “Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement”, p. 137.

²⁵⁴ Garton, “Psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales”, p. 31. See also Kirk and Twigg, “Regulating Australian bodies”, pp. 25-31, for a discussion of the influence of eugenics on the establishment of school medical inspections in Victoria.

focused on improving the physical health of children through medical inspection. Routine medical inspection was introduced into Queensland schools largely through Elkington's agency.²⁵⁵ Elkington was interested in making the medical study of children a national cause, and was also insistent that physical causes of behaviour be investigated as a priority before any decision was taken as to treatment of children.²⁵⁶ In 1911, a medical branch of the Department of Public Instruction was established to deal with medical inspections.²⁵⁷

An examination of Elkington's views on school hygiene reveals that concerns about racial fitness and eugenics informed his promotion of this subject. Elkington saw medical inspections as just one aspect of a larger topic he referred to as school hygiene. In a 1907 work entitled *Health in the school, or Hygiene for teachers*, Elkington stated that the work of educators and sanitarians was complementary, because children could not function if hygiene was neglected, and that the next generation would be dependent on "the healthy or unhealthy condition of the bodies of the children now in our schools."²⁵⁸ He identified the neglect of physical factors in education as a serious problem. Elkington was explicit that the object of school hygiene was to "increase educational efficiency

²⁵⁵ Elkington established the first routine medical inspections of school children in Tasmania (Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 151). Victoria and New South Wales had also introduced routine medical and dental inspections by this time (Swan, *From segregation to integration*, p. 137).

²⁵⁶ Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 101; Evans and Parry, "Vessels of progressivism?", pp. 325-26.

²⁵⁷ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ Elkington, *Health in the school*, pp. 7-9.

and therefore to raise the physical and mental standard of the race.”²⁵⁹ Physical culture and medical inspections were part of school hygiene, but its primary function was to improve the physical environment of schools so that children could be educated more efficiently.²⁶⁰ Elkington stated that it was a subject which was both interesting to children, and of great ethical importance:

In conjunction with its allies, Domestic Economy and Civics, it practically conforms to that science of Eugenics – the coping stone of modern education – towards which the most advanced educational thinkers are striving.²⁶¹

He continued that:

Elementary hygiene, domestic economy, and elementary civics may be so taught as to form one subject of profound interest, and to create an increasing purpose towards the healthy happy life of the Eugenist.²⁶²

In his statements in the Queensland press at this time, Elkington stressed the use of medical inspections and school hygiene in improving the race and ensuring racial fitness, although he made no explicit references to eugenics, in contrast to his book. In December 1910, the *Queensland Education Office Gazette* reported on a speech given by Elkington to the School Committee’s Association, in which he argued that the laws of nature could not be ignored, and that physical

²⁵⁹ Elkington, *Health in the school*, p. 8.

²⁶⁰ Elkington, *Health in the school*, pp. 13-14.

²⁶¹ Elkington, *Health in the school*, p. 15.

²⁶² Elkington, *Health in the school*, p. 161.

environment governed the brain.²⁶³ He stated that the aim of school hygiene was to increase educational efficiency and thus improve the physical and mental standard of the race, a statement similar to those made in his book. His statement that he wanted to adopt “a doctrine of national physical morality” was reminiscent of attempts to make a link between physical fitness and morality.²⁶⁴ The *Education Office Gazette* reported on the plan to introduce medical inspections of state school children, although not at great length.²⁶⁵

In 1910, Elkington made many similar points in a speech to the Darling Downs Teachers’ Association, reported in the *Week*. He stated that “hygiene was the science of health, and health was the controlling and essential factor in education.”²⁶⁶ Elkington continued that daily inspections “for cleanliness of body and attire carried great possibilities”, not only of permanently improving the health of the children, but also of “detecting sick children, and preventing the unauthorised return of those excluded on account of illness or infective surroundings.”²⁶⁷ Elkington further stated that school medical inspection was “a strictly utilitarian procedure.”²⁶⁸ He concluded with a statement about the value of school

²⁶³ “School hygiene”, *Education Office Gazette, Queensland*, 12, 12 (1910), pp. 380-81.

²⁶⁴ “School hygiene”, p. 388. For more on this link see Sarah Mirams, “‘For their moral health’: James Barrett, urban progressive ideas and National Park Preservation in Victoria”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 120 (2002), p. 250.

²⁶⁵ *Education Office Gazette, Queensland*, 12, 4 (1910), p. 114.

²⁶⁶ “School hygiene: proposed medical inspection: health commissioner’s remarks”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 20.

²⁶⁷ “School hygiene”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 20.

²⁶⁸ “School hygiene”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 20.

medical inspection in securing the future good of the race. Inspection, he said, was:

... an organised effort to help teachers to meet their responsibilities towards child bodies, which control so effectively the child brains which it is their business to assist, to help parents to keep their families healthy, properly nourished, and clean in body and mind, to help the taxpayer to get all that he pays for in the way of primary education, and to help Queensland to build up with more certainty and security that race of strong, healthy, well balanced men and women to which her climate and conditions entitle her.²⁶⁹

Elkington thus made an explicit link between education for hygiene and temperance and the future good, or “security”, of the race. No other discussions of medical inspections referred so specifically to racial fitness.

At the same time as the introduction of these inspections, there was also discussion of school hygiene generally, although again, this was focused on practical benefits.²⁷⁰ The *Queenslander* reported that Elkington was preparing lessons on hygienic temperance to be given in state schools.²⁷¹ In 1910, the Queensland Home Secretary, Appel, responded to calls for hygienic lessons in schools by stating that such lessons were already

²⁶⁹ “School hygiene”, *Week* (Brisbane), 8 April 1910, p. 20.

²⁷⁰ School hygiene was a subject of international interest at this time. In August 1910, the Third International Congress of School Hygienics was held in Paris. The Queensland government was invited to send a representative, but was unable to do so, although they did request a copy of any publications produced by the congress. See Third International Congress of School Hygienics, Paris, 2-7 August 1910, in-letter 6022 of 1910: pamphlet on congress; J. D. Story, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction to General Secretary, Third International Congress of School Hygiene, 29 March 1910, in-letter not provided [copy], EDU/A173, Queensland State Archives.

²⁷¹ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 23 April 1910, p. 10.

being prepared.²⁷² The *Week* reported that a deputation had also been assured by the Minister for Public Instruction, W. H. Barnes, that lessons currently being prepared for inclusion in the school curriculum would include both scientific temperance and school hygiene.²⁷³ Both temperance and hygiene were goals promoted by the eugenics movement.²⁷⁴

Despite Elkington's eugenic motivations, most people focused on the practical benefits of school medical inspections.²⁷⁵ Indeed, one of the major practical reasons for the establishment of these inspections was to combat the widespread incidence of ophthalmia, or blight, among Queensland schoolchildren.²⁷⁶ Four part-time inspectors were appointed in July 1912, with salaries of £100 per year, and travel expenses.²⁷⁷ Their duties included two hour sessions, twice a week, and routine inspections. The inspections were to begin with a brief examination of each child entering school, to ascertain their "fitness for school life, and remediable defects."²⁷⁸ A more thorough examination was then to be

²⁷² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 106 (27 October 1910), pp. 1723, 1727.

²⁷³ "Scientific temperance", *Week* (Brisbane), 6 May 1910, p. 15.

²⁷⁴ "Practical eugenics: a survey of the work of the congress", *The Times* (London), 31 July 1912, p. 4; Grant Rodwell, "Persons of lax morality: temperance, eugenics and education in Australia, 1900-30", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 64 (2000), pp. 62-3.

²⁷⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 106 (27 October 1910), p. 1723.

²⁷⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 91 (30 October 1903), p. 984; Andrew S. Cairns, Head Teacher, Mabuiag Island School to Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, 27 August 1904, in-letter 28044 of 1904, A/58907, Queensland State Archives; Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 3.

²⁷⁷ Department of Public Instruction to Public Service Board, instruction recommending the appointment of four part-time medical inspectors of schools, 9 July 1912, in-letter 19130 of 1912, A/15971, Queensland State Archives.

²⁷⁸ Department of Public Instruction to Public Service Board, instruction recommending the appointment of four part-time medical inspectors of schools, 9 July 1912, in-letter 19130 of 1912, A/15971, Queensland State Archives.

made as soon as possible after eight years, "to detect defects, and estimate the effect of school life on the child and body."²⁷⁹ A final inspection was then to be made before the child left school, "at which [time] advice may be given regarding the child's work in life".²⁸⁰ The inspectors also had to carry out continuing examinations on any children found to be defective or suffering from an infectious illness. The inspectors had the power to exclude any children who could possibly be infectious, and it was they who directed the head teacher to send the necessary forms to parents in any cases where "defects interfering with the child's educational progress" were found.²⁸¹ Although the medical inspectors' duties were to examine children for both mental and physical defects, the records of these inspections indicate that they focused primarily on physical defects.²⁸² This was perhaps not surprising in view of the extensive incidence of physical defects in Queensland school children that these inspections uncovered.²⁸³ In Queensland, in contrast to other states, the collection of anthropometrical information never comprised a major component of medical inspections.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ Department of Public Instruction to Public Service Board, 9 July 1912, in-letter 19130 of 1912, A/15971, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸⁰ Department of Public Instruction to Public Service Board, 9 July 1912, in-letter 19130 of 1912, A/15971, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸¹ Department of Public Instruction to Public Service Board, 9 July 1912, in-letter 19130 of 1912, A/15971, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸² See Medical Inspectors' summaries of results of inspections, and Registers of medical examinations of school children, both in Medical Officers, correspondence, A/15973, Queensland State Archives.

²⁸³ Holthouse, *Looking back*, p. 91.

²⁸⁴ F. Tate, Director of Education, Melbourne to the Director of Education, Brisbane, 6 November 1916, in-letter 38349 of 1916; W. T. McCoy, Director of Education, Hobart to R. Roe, Director of Education, Brisbane, 4 August 1916, in-letter 38349 of 1916, TR1356/2, Queensland State Archives.

Many eugenicists believed that inspections could be used as a means of separating the genuinely “defective” from those who were merely hindered by easily remedied physical problems, with “defectives” then being segregated.²⁸⁵ Dr Eleanor Bourne, who was appointed as Chief Medical Officer in 1911, was a strong advocate of using medical inspections for this purpose, claiming that if mental “defectives” were not segregated they would cause difficulties for their guardians and themselves, and become “a constant expense and a menace to the community”.²⁸⁶ In 1915, however, Bourne enlisted in the Australian Medical Corps and left Australia for Britain; when she returned, she was far less involved in school medical inspections.²⁸⁷ Elkington firmly believed that many, perhaps most, cases of backwardness in children were the result of physical causes.²⁸⁸ There is also evidence that many parents were reluctant to pursue medical treatment, even when their child’s minor physical defects were brought to their attention.²⁸⁹ Thus, it

²⁸⁵ “Schools for mentally defective children: London Education Committee’s scheme”, *The Times* (London), 21 November 1912, p. 13.

²⁸⁶ Eleanor D. Bourne, Chief Medical Inspector of Schools, Appendix D, in “Fortieth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1915”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1916), p. 150.

²⁸⁷ Swan, *From segregation to integration*, p. 148.

²⁸⁸ Elkington, *Health in the school*, p. 145-46.

²⁸⁹ For two example, see Annie Fortescue, Head Teacher, Girls State School, Charters Towers to Dr E. M. Sweet, Medical Branch, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 27 October 1914, in-letter not provided; Alice Musgrave, Head Teacher, State School Chamber’s Flat, Kingston to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 19 November 1914, in-letter 39948 of 1914, A/15973, Queensland State Archives. This was not unusual in Australia (Kirk and Twigg, “Regulating Australian bodies”, pp. 29-30).

seems that using medical inspections as a means to segregate mentally “defective” children was not a priority in Queensland.

In 1920, Bourne resigned as Chief Medical Officer, and the position remained vacant until 1925, with local part-time practitioners carrying out inspections.²⁹⁰ In this year, Welch was appointed as the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Public Instruction, and attempted to reform medical inspections by appointing full-time inspectors.²⁹¹ This was not entirely successful, however, as many part-time practitioners resigned, and were not replaced by full-time inspectors.²⁹² By 1929, medical inspection was still compulsory, but dental examination was not.²⁹³ This was due largely to the Depression, as the School Medical Branch lost staff at this time. In 1937, the School Medical Branch was transferred to the Department of Health and Home Affairs, and renamed the Division of School Health Services.²⁹⁴ Welch hoped that the service would continue to expand, but it did not do so.²⁹⁵ Welch retired in 1947. Thus, the introduction of school medical inspections was due in part to

²⁹⁰ Wilson, “Forty-ninth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1924”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1925), p. 747.

²⁹¹ Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 154. Welsh also supported the segregation of mental defectives, but with the advent of opportunity classes, this issue was much less pressing at this time (Swan, *From segregation to integration*, p. 148).

²⁹² Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 155.

²⁹³ “Child health: work in schools: medical inspection”, *Brisbane Courier*, 25 June 1929, p. 17.

²⁹⁴ Holthouse, *Looking back*, p. 93; Patrick, *A history of health and medicine*, p. 156.

²⁹⁵ In 1958, the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Education complained that health rooms were built for medical inspections, but were frequently appropriated for other purposes: P. R. Patrick, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Education to Director General of Education, 20 November 1958, in-letter 74341 of 1958, A/15860, Queensland State Archives.

the influence of eugenic concerns about the future of the race. This was of less importance, however, than the practical benefits of these inspections, which continued long past the time when such influences were discussed in relation to this program.²⁹⁶

The debate on school hygiene was not limited to medical inspections, but also encompassed sex education, reflecting a general trend at this time to link hygiene and morality. This was apparent in Queensland, for example in Elkington's statement in 1910 that children should be "clean in body and mind".²⁹⁷ A 1910 article in the Young Queenslander section of the *Queenslander* newspaper urged young men to be clean both inside and out, "for, while men look at the surface, God looks at the heart, and skin-deep cleanliness never deceives Him for a moment."²⁹⁸ Many eugenicists were involved in the dissemination of sex education.²⁹⁹ Saleeby stated that education should culminate in instruction for responsible parenthood, or, in other words, in sex education.³⁰⁰ Education in sex

²⁹⁶ In 1927, the New South Wales Minister for Education, Mutch, argued that the institution of medical inspections had been beneficial in improving the health of children in the state ("State's children: good physique: Mr. Mutch's statement", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 March 1927, p. 8; also "School children's health", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1927, p. 12.

²⁹⁷ "School hygiene", *Week* (Brisbane), p. 20.

²⁹⁸ "Skin-deep cleanliness", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 January 1910, p. 45. See also W. F. Woodcraft, General Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association to A. H. Barlow, 19 August 1907, in-letter not provided, EDU/A172, Queensland State Archives.

²⁹⁹ "Eugenics for the young", *The Times* (London), 20 January 1912, p. 4; "Racial hygiene: menace of contagion", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1927, p. 12; Scharlieb, *Womanhood and race-regeneration*, p. 32; Richard Soloway, "The 'perfect contraceptive': eugenics and birth control research in Britain and America in the interwar years", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30, 4 (1995), pp. 637-40.

³⁰⁰ C. W. Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture: an outline of eugenics* (London: Cassell, 1909), p. xii.

hygiene was seen as one way to reverse the decay of British racial stock in Australia.³⁰¹

In Queensland, the Department of Public Instruction encouraged ignorance of the physical facts of sex for most of the first half of the twentieth century.³⁰² Human physiology was taught in schools, but reproductive physiology was omitted until 1938. Roe, the inspector-general of schools until 1917, was also a member of the Queensland Council of Public Morality, founded in 1910.³⁰³ He was not, however, in favour of sex education in schools. At the 1916 Conference of Directors, where sex education was an important issue, Roe influenced the directors to shift responsibility for the subject to parents. Both Roe and Story suggested that if responsibility were to return to schools, medical inspectors would be the best people to provide such education.

Roe drafted a circular on sex hygiene which he suggested could be given to parents to help them in educating their children. His attitudes on the subject as revealed in this circular were typical of the time. The circular stated that ignorance of the physical changes of puberty could lead to “much physical and moral mischief” among children.³⁰⁴ Masturbation

³⁰¹ Rodwell, “Curing the precocious masturbator”, p. 82; “Sex hygiene: university lectures”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 July 1927, p. 16.

³⁰² Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 4.

³⁰³ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 6.

³⁰⁴ Circular enclosed with P. Board, Director of Education, Sydney to J. D. Story, Under Secretary, Brisbane, 18 December 1917, in-letter 00629 of 1917, Queensland State Archives.

was condemned as disgusting, immoral, a danger to health, strength, and endurance, and as an act which weakened mental and moral power.³⁰⁵ “Cleanliness”, both literal and figurative, was advocated as a remedy, in a similar vein to the 1910 *Queenslander* article. Illicit sexual intercourse, that is, sex before marriage, was described as “both immoral and dangerous”.³⁰⁶ Although the danger was not stated explicitly, it appeared to refer to venereal disease. Roe had prepared a separate pamphlet for girls, which was essentially the same as the boys’, with the exception of a list of safeguards against illicit sexual intercourse. These safeguards included the avoidance of “all unwholesome books and sensational plays and picture shows”, as well as exercise.³⁰⁷ Roe sent these circulars to the New South Wales director of Education, P. Board for his comments. Board was representative of the attitudes of most towards sex education at this time in his reluctance to distribute them, or in fact to take any action on the subject of sex education.³⁰⁸

In 1917, a deputation from the Council of Public Morality visited the Minister for Public Instruction, Herbert Hardacre.³⁰⁹ Among those who

³⁰⁵ Rodwell argues that clitoridectomies were performed on some Australian girls in the early twentieth century in order to prevent them masturbating, and that circumcisions were performed on boys with the same intent (“Curing the precocious masturbator”, p. 82); Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 217.

³⁰⁶ Circular enclosed with Board to Story, 18 December 1917, in-letter 00629 of 1917, Queensland State Archives. See Foucault, *The history of sexuality I*, pp. 30-1.

³⁰⁷ Circular enclosed with Board to Story, 18 December 1917, in-letter 00629 of 1917, Queensland State Archives.

³⁰⁸ Board to Story, 18 December 1917, in-letter 629 of 1917, Queensland State Archives.

³⁰⁹ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality dealing with a request that prepared pamphlets be sent to all parents of a certain age, Department of

made up this deputation were Archbishop Donaldson, Roe, Dr W. N. Robertson, Dr Kerr Scott, and Mrs Mason Beatty. The deputation intended to discuss sex education, particularly in the light of the increasing incidence of venereal disease at this time.³¹⁰ Roe stated that although it was impossible to eradicate immorality, it was possible to eradicate any that was due to ignorance, particularly on the part of children.³¹¹ Robertson elaborated on this position, claiming that children acquired vices through ignorance, and also from other children. These vices could ruin both children's moral fibre and their mentality. He continued that he was most concerned about "the economic aspect of the question":

There was no doubt about it that boys and girls who develop these filthy habits ruin their mentality and the result is that they become inefficient as citizens, fill the jails, lunatic asylums and hospitals, and cut down the productive capacity of the country.³¹²

Scott said that if children were not instructed in the right way it would contribute "to a downfall in our race."³¹³ Thus both Scott and Robertson

Public Instruction, Brisbane, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁰ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, 6 December 1917, p. 3, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives. See also Joy Damousi, "Marching to different drums: women's mobilisations 1914-1939", in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, eds, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), pp. 362, 366; Judith Smart, "Feminists, flappers and Miss Australia: contesting the meanings of citizenship, femininity and nation in the 1920s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 71 (2001), p. 2.

³¹¹ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, 6 December 1917, p. 5, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

³¹² Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, 6 December 1917, p. 5, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

³¹³ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, 6 December 1917, p. 9, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

argued the view that sex education was essential to prevent racial degeneration, and linked an ignorance of the facts of sex with a variety of social problems. It is also noticeable that Robertson stressed the potential for economic loss in his submission, arguing that a failure to provide proper sex education would lead to the development of “inefficient” citizens. Hardacre was generally supportive of the aims of the society, but not enough to take action.³¹⁴

Debate over the issue of sex education was most intense in 1917, but continued until 1920.³¹⁵ Between 1921 and 1938, however, interest in the subject was sporadic, due to the decreased incidence of venereal disease at this time.³¹⁶ In 1924, in an attempt to raise interest in the subject of sex education, F. Martyn Renner, the secretary of the newly formed Dominion Council of the New Zealand White Cross League, wrote to Huxham, the Minister for Public Instruction in Queensland, enclosing a copy of a letter from C. J. Parr, the New Zealand Minister for Public Instruction, in which he contended that the teaching of sex hygiene was extremely important.³¹⁷ During his time in charge of the health department, Parr had arranged for Dr Truby King to speak to high school boys, and the coadjutor of King’s society, Miss Patterson, to speak to girls. These lectures were successful because they treated the subject

³¹⁴ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, 6 December 1917, p. 10, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁵ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 15.

³¹⁶ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 24.

³¹⁷ F. Martyn Renner, Wellington to Minister for Education of Queensland, Brisbane, 20 May 1924, in-letter 24429 of 1924, Queensland State Archives.

from a medical point of view and thus led pupils to view their bodies as “a sacred physical inheritance”.³¹⁸

It is interesting to note that similar attitudes to morality persisted well into the 1940s. In 1947, the *Courier Mail* reported on a speech given by a Mrs E. A. Waterworth to a public meeting held in Tasmania by the National Council of Women. The meeting was held to gain support for re-establishing a State Film Censorship Board in Tasmania.³¹⁹ Waterworth was a former Queensland school teacher, described by the *Courier Mail* as a “keen worker for child welfare”.³²⁰ She was also an influential campaigner for the segregation of the “unfit”.³²¹ Waterworth contended that films were the second greatest evil in the world, after war, as they were a bad influence on children who did not have proper training at home.³²² Nevertheless, the government continued to argue that responsibility for sex education remained with parents, and none was provided in schools even by the late 1940s.³²³

One of the more “positive” ways in which eugenics and concerns about racial fitness could influence education was in the encouragement of physical training to complement schooling. Many Australian

³¹⁸ Renner to Minister for Education of Queensland, 20 May 1924, in-letter 24429 of 1924, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁹ “Films no. 2 ‘evil’”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 21 January 1947, p. 6.

³²⁰ “Films no. 2 ‘evil’”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 21 January 1947, p. 6.

³²¹ Evans and Parry, “Vessels of progressivism?”, p. 325.

³²² “Films no. 2 ‘evil’”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 21 January 1947, p. 6.

³²³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 194 (9 November 1948-49), p. 1249.

commentators argued that physical activity could counteract racial degeneration.³²⁴ Physical activity was thus encouraged not only for its intrinsic value, but also because it could help strengthen racial fitness.³²⁵ Elkington believed in the value of physical culture, arguing that it should be carefully regulated by medical professionals.³²⁶ The origin of state and federal government interest in physical fitness was in defence planning prior to World War I.³²⁷ Interest and participation in these activities dwindled during the interwar years.

In 1903, one Queensland parliamentarian stated that too much studying was not healthy, particularly in the tropics, and that schools should incorporate physical activity as well mental.³²⁸ In the early twentieth century, there were concerns that although physical training was healthy, too much of it was taxing the strength of girls.³²⁹ By 1910, however, the *Queenslander* stressed the importance of encouraging girls to be physically active, stating that it would improve both health and efficiency.³³⁰ Later, the newspaper argued that physical exercise, particularly for girls, had “a striking and beneficial effect – an effect

³²⁴ The development of kindergartens and playgrounds was influenced in part by middle class fears that working class children were contributing to racial deterioration (van Krieken, *Children and the state*, p. 104; Rodwell, “Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement”, pp. 129, 135, 146).

³²⁵ Caroline Daley, “The strongman of eugenics, Eugen Sandow”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 33, 120 (2002), p. 233-35. See also See Stefan Kühn, *The Nazi connection: eugenics, American racism, and German National Socialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 29; Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, p. 632.

³²⁶ Elkington, *Health in the school*, p. 14.

³²⁷ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, p. 68.

³²⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 91 (30 October 1903), p. 988.

³²⁹ “Feminine echoes”, *Brisbane Courier*, 1 September 1900, p. 9.

³³⁰ “Physical culture for young girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 May 1910, p. 6.

which shows itself mentally, physically and morally.”³³¹ The idea that mental and physical activity should be combined was also promoted in the Queensland *Education Office Gazette*. In a 1910 issue, it argued that not only was exercise a necessary part of schooling, but that this exercise should also combine aspects of mental activity.³³² It appears that physical training was an important topic at the national Directors of Education Conferences during the 1920s.³³³ In 1924, the Queensland Department of Public Instruction specifically requested a discussion of physical training.³³⁴

During the 1930s, intimations of war, combined with German success at the 1936 Olympics, prompted renewed interest in physical training and education in schools.³³⁵ In 1938, Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Bjelke-Petersen argued that playgrounds should be made available, with physical culture instructors after school hours.³³⁶ Bjelke-Petersen had once been the inspector of physical training of the Commonwealth

³³¹ “Physical drill for school girls”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 September 1911, p. 29. A link between physical and mental health and morality was common at this time (Rodwell, “Only by persistent effort in the face of discouragement”, p. 146).

³³² “Mental stimulus necessary in physical exercises”, *Education Office Gazette, Queensland*, 12, 2 (1910), pp. 48-51.

³³³ Matthews, Secretary, Board of Education, London to McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 12 December 1922, in-letter 3142 of 1923; Crawford, Secretary for Education, Hobart to Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 27 January 1923, in-letter 3733 of 1923; Andrews, Director of Education, Perth to McKenna, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 30 September 1924, in-letter 252 of 1924, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁴ McKenna, Director, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane to Andrews, Director of Education, Perth, 19 September 1924, in-letter 252 of 1924, TR1356/3, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁵ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, p. 68.

³³⁶ “Fitness drive urged for working girls: ‘would benefit whole nation’”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 September 1938, p. 2.

military forces, and was speaking at the anniversary rally of the Youth Leaders' Convention of the National Council of Religious Education in Australia in the Church of Christ. He argued that a fierce battle was being waged in Europe by both religious and godless societies for the training of the child. He also praised the federal government for taking action to ban immoral literature from Australia.³³⁷ Between 1937 and 1940, all states made preparation for physical education, anticipating government funding.³³⁸ The National Fitness Council was formed in 1939 for the supervision and co-ordination of funds and activities.³³⁹ In 1941, the Council was made a statutory authority, as a direct result of the war.

The impact of physical education in schools was immediate.³⁴⁰ From 1939 to 1940, trained instructors and teachers gave courses in physical education instruction for teachers. The new program emphasised education and expression, in contrast to the training and drill of the pre-World War I period. There is evidence that the Queensland Department of Education placed a high priority on the subject. The *Education Office Gazette* regularly carried advertisements for training for teachers in physical education.³⁴¹ There were camps held to instruct teachers in

³³⁷ "Fitness drive urged for working girls", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 September 1938, p. 2.

³³⁸ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, p. 68.

³³⁹ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, p. 69.

³⁴⁰ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, p. 69.

³⁴¹ See for example *Education Office Gazette, Queensland* (Brisbane): 47, 2 (1945), p. 26, and 47, 3 (1945), p. 40.

methods.³⁴² The *Gazette* also prepared a long list of books which comprised the physical education library, as well as supplementary works.³⁴³ In 1946 there was a series of nine experimental broadcasts about physical education made to Infants' Schools.³⁴⁴ Queensland, however, was the last state to "overhaul" its physical education program, and the Secretary for Public Instruction, H. A. Bruce, did not see a difference between physical education and school sports.³⁴⁵ In 1940, he stated that physical culture had always been taught in Queensland schools.³⁴⁶ Bruce continued: "You can have all your highbrows who talk about the things we want in education, but the main thing is physical fitness."³⁴⁷

The Depression, followed by World War II, led to the halting of building programs, decreases in teachers' salaries, and staff shortages.³⁴⁸ All these conditions remained endemic in Queensland education at least until 1950.³⁴⁹ Despite this, both government and opposition parliamentarians continued to argue that education was essential to the

³⁴² *Education Office Gazette, Queensland* (Brisbane): 49, 6 (1947), p. 121, and 49, 8 (1947), p. 164.

³⁴³ *Education Office Gazette, Queensland* (Brisbane): 47, 3 (1945), p. 43, and 47, 8 (1945), p. 102.

³⁴⁴ "Physical education broadcasts to infants' schools", *Education Office Gazette, Queensland* (Brisbane), 48, 7 (1946), p. 125.

³⁴⁵ Spaul, *Australian education in the Second World War*, p. 71.

³⁴⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (29 October 1940), p. 1040.

³⁴⁷ T. L. Williams stressed the importance of "good, clean sport" in education, while Thomas Nimmo agreed that physical education was essential (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (29 October 1940), pp. 1032, 1042).

³⁴⁸ Logan and Clarke, *State education in Queensland*, p. 4; Swan, *From segregation to integration*, p. 179.

³⁴⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 194 (24 November 1948-49), p. 1609.

future of the state, although they disagreed on the type of education needed. In 1940, the government proposed to amend the *Education Act* of 1875 to give teachers greater protection from parental aggression.³⁵⁰ Edmund Maher, the leader of the opposition, saw this as further evidence of an increasing softness in contemporary life, asking “What sort of a race are we going to develop?”³⁵¹ Bruce was concerned that his advocacy of physical fitness might be linked to an increasing tendency towards aggression on the part of parents.³⁵² Vincent Gair believed that there was an absence of discipline at home.³⁵³ Nevertheless, there was a general agreement that education was imperative for the development of the state, particularly moral education which would develop good citizens.³⁵⁴ T. L. Williams argued that it was particularly important at that time, when educated countries were fighting the “less morally and less mentally developed countries of the world.”³⁵⁵ There was bipartisan agreement that physical education was an essential aspect of education and building character.³⁵⁶ Bedford, although he agreed that education was important, provided a dissenting voice on the issue when he argued

³⁵⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (11 October 1940), p. 684.

³⁵¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (11 October 1940), p. 684.

³⁵² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (25 October 1940), p. 988.

³⁵³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (25 October 1940), p. 992.

³⁵⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (29 October 1940), pp. 1031-32, 1039, 1049.

³⁵⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (29 October 1940), p. 1032.

³⁵⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (29 October 1940), pp. 1035, 1040-42, 1049.

that no amount of education could change inherited character.³⁵⁷ This opinion, however, was distinctly in the minority by this time.³⁵⁸

Education in Australia displayed the influence of eugenic ideas and concerns about racial fitness. As in other areas, however, Queensland did not always follow the rest of the country. The influence of concerns about racial fitness were more often seen through the agency of an influential individual than through government policy. This was the case with Elkington's promotion of school hygiene and medical inspections, and with Bevington's instigation of "opportunity" classes. In relation to medical inspections, physical education, and the development of opportunity classes, it is obvious that measures could be promoted for a variety of reasons. One of the motivations behind these measures was related to eugenic beliefs about improving racial fitness. The continuation of these programs, however, focused on more practical benefits. Thus, an examination of the development of these programs in Queensland reveals the complexity of discourse, and the continuity of ideas, in this area between 1900 and 1950.

³⁵⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (29 October 1940), p. 1049.

³⁵⁸ Macintyre argues that by the 1950s, the general population in Australia were beginning to perceive education as a higher priority (*Winners and losers*, p. 101).

Chapter Six

The “white” race

National identity, eugenic ideology racial fitness

Ideas about racial fitness and heredity were prevalent in Queensland between 1900 and 1950 with regard to marginalised groups, such as the mentally disturbed and non-European races, and in debate about children, another group that possessed little power in its dealings with authority. They were also evident in debate about mainstream society. In contrast to other groups, these discussions tended to focus on the best ways to achieve desirable characteristics among a favoured section of the population, rather than on ways to prevent undesirable characteristics from being perpetuated. There was no question that the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland, or those of other races, were included in this discussion. Thus, these debates were all related to how to achieve the most desirable characteristics in the white population of Queensland, and in this way reflected eugenic concerns. They also reflected racial anxieties, and touched on the difficult issue of what constituted the “white” race.¹ Fears of racial degeneration, and tensions between white

¹ The examination of “whiteness” as a category was a neglected area until recently. See, for example, Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 42-7; Belinda Mackay, ed., *Unmasking whiteness: race relations and reconciliation* (Nathan: Queensland Studies Centre, Griffith University, 1999); Shawn Michelle Smith, “‘Baby’s picture is always treasured’: eugenics and the reproduction of

Australians and those who belonged to other races, were implicit in this discourse.

It was a discourse which was apparent in many western countries at this time, but it assumed greater importance in Australia, as a result of racial anxieties and fears about the degenerative effect of the climate.² In Queensland, immigration was considered vital to the future of the state, and debate on this subject therefore raised considerations of the characteristics considered essential to the future racial fitness of the Queensland population.³ Issues surrounding white settlement in the tropical north of the state were also widely discussed from the beginning of settlement in Queensland.⁴ This debate assumed a particular

whiteness in the family photograph album", *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 11, 1 (1998), pp. 197-220.

² Warwick Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness: science, health and racial destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), pp. 1-2; Carol Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women: the impact of scientific theories on attitudes towards women, 1870-1920", in Elizabeth Windschuttle, ed., *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on Australia, 1788-1978* (Auckland: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 133-34; David Walker, *Anxious nation: Australia and the rise of Asia 1850-1939* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999), p. 141. For international discourse see Richard Cleminson, *Anarchism, science and sex: eugenics in eastern Spain, 1900-1937* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 17, 41; Marvin Harris, *The rise of anthropological theory: a history of theories of culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1968), p. 54; Marouf Arif Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics in Anglo-American thought* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 6; Daniel J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics: genetics and the uses of human heredity* 2nd ed., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 72; Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 510-13; Edward Shorter, *A history of psychiatry: from the era of the asylum to the age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), pp. 93-4.

³ The desire for immigration was apparent from the beginning of white settlement in Queensland (W. Ross Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988), pp. 395-96).

⁴ Ross Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), pp. 93-5; at this stage there were concerns about the climate even in the south-east corner of the region. See also Raphael Cilento and Clem Lack, *Triumph in the tropics: a historical sketch of Queensland* (Brisbane: Smith and Paterson, 1959), p. 422; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, pp. 61-3.

importance in the early twentieth century, for a variety of reasons, primarily related to the importance placed at this time on the development of a "White Australia".⁵ These issues led to a discussion of racial improvement and concomitant fears of degeneration which frequently intersected with areas of eugenic interest during the first half of the twentieth century. These debates were explicitly concerned with the regulation of sexuality in the interests of the state.⁶

This chapter will explore the incidence of eugenic influence and ideas about racial fitness in Queensland as they were expressed in relation to mainstream society, or in other words, the "white" race. Eugenic ideas about national character were an important aspect of the movement.⁷ In Queensland, as in the rest of Australia, this debate focused only on the so-called "white" race. This chapter will show how these ideas influenced debate in Queensland about the characteristics which should be

⁵ P. P. Courtenay, "The white man and the Australian tropics: a review of some opinions and prejudices of the pre-war years", in *Lectures on north Queensland history: second series* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1975), p. 57. Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, p. 73, argues that despite doubts in the early years of Australian colonisation, by the end of the nineteenth century, southern Australia was considered habitable for the white race, but questions remained about the tropical north. See also Alison Bashford, "Is White Australia possible?: race, colonialism and tropical medicine", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23, 2 (2000), pp. 248-49.

⁶ Foucault argued that from the eighteenth century onwards, a multiplicity of discourses on sex aimed at intensifying awareness of it as a constant danger, with the intention of social control focused on the sexuality of couples, parents and children; this also had the result of creating further incentive to discuss it (Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality Volume 1: an introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 30-1). See also Lynette Finch, *The classing gaze: sexuality, class and surveillance* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993); Ruth A. Wallace and Alison Wolf, *Contemporary sociological theory: expanding the classical tradition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), pp. 376-78.

⁷ Karl Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics* 2nd ed. (London: Dulau, 1909), especially pp. 40-41. See also Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English thought: the interaction between biological and social theory* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), p. 108.

perpetuated by the “white race” in the state. The chapter will first briefly discuss those characteristics perceived as desirable for Queensland society. The ideal population was white and able-bodied, and also mentally able, although this was of lesser importance. It will also examine the expression of fears for the consequences if a “fit” white race was not maintained in Queensland.

The chapter will then explore the proposed methods for achieving a “fit” population, exploring the connections between ideas about racial fitness and heredity and the influence of eugenic ideology. The areas which were encompassed by this debate include discussions about the birth-rate and infant mortality, and about marriage. Also important to this discussion were fears of venereal disease, which was seen as an agent of racial degeneration. The chapter will then turn to a consideration of the issue of white settlement in the tropics. This debate was long-standing in Queensland, and revealed a great deal about racial anxieties in the state. Finally, the chapter will examine discourse about immigration in Queensland.

A wide range of issues were considered relevant in any discussions about racial improvement, as was explored in Chapter One. Eugenicists were particularly concerned with claiming as broad a scope as possible for the

influence of the movement.⁸ C. W. Saleeby contended that “everything that affects every possible parent is a matter of eugenic concern: and not only those factors which affect the choice for parenthood.”⁹ Even Leonard Darwin, who advocated a narrower, more focused, scope for eugenic influence, identified a number of different areas as being relevant to eugenics. When he wrote to the Queensland government in 1918, the questions he posed encompassed typical eugenic topics, such as support for legislation to encourage the marriage and reproduction of the “fit” and discourage the “unfit”.¹⁰ He was also interested in possible adoption of an emigration policy that “would tend to equalize the sexes in your Dominion.”¹¹ Further queries were posed on intermarriage between races, the effects of climate on fertility, the origin and subsequent distribution of emigrants to overseas dominions, and finally, any other matters related to “the general problem of securing the best possible stock to populate the Empire.”¹² Although the Queensland government was uninterested in this correspondence, the issues raised by Darwin

⁸ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, pp. 31, 35, argues that many people in the early twentieth century had become the target of eugenic concerns from the time of their birth, and even before. See also Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 57-8; Grant Rodwell, “Professor Harvey Sutton: national hygienist as eugenicist and educator”, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, 2 (1998), pp. 169-72; Rob Watts, “Beyond nature and nurture: eugenics in twentieth century Australian history”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 40, 3 (1994), p. 319.

⁹ C. W. Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture: an outline of eugenics* (London: Cassell, 1909), p. ix.

¹⁰ Major Leonard Darwin, President, Eugenics Education Society, London to Lady Goold-Adams, Government House, Brisbane, 26 April 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹¹ Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

¹² Darwin to Lady Goold-Adams, 26 April 1918, A/31784, Queensland State Archives.

were of great importance in debate in Queensland throughout the first half of the twentieth century.¹³

There is evidence of great concern with the Australian national character in public and government debate between 1900 and 1950. Stuart Macintyre argues that Australian society inherited a sense of the superiority of white civilisation from Britain, but that this sense of superiority acquired a more anxious, aggressive tone in Australia, due to its proximity to many countries of "inferior" races, and its isolation from Britain and the rest of Europe.¹⁴ Although debates about the white population of Australia were often notable for their bravado, in fact they were informed by overwhelming fears of invasion.¹⁵ By the 1890s, racism and nationalism were so strong in Australia that the entry of any non-European was seen as a cause for concern.¹⁶ Although this was an international phenomenon, it was more pronounced in Australia.

¹³ Circular, Queensland Council for study and training in social service, pp. 2-3, in-letter 195 of 1938, HHA/10, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁴ D. M. Gibb, *The making of "white Australia"* (Melbourne: Victorian Historical Association, 1979), p. 102; Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia Volume 4: The succeeding age: 1901-1942* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 68-9; A. T. Yarwood and M. J. Knowling, *Race relations in Australia: a history* (Sydney: Methuen, 1982), p. 248.

¹⁵ Gibb, *The making of "white Australia"*, pp. 62-5; S. Encel, "The nature of race prejudice in Australia", in F. S. Stevens, ed., *Racism: the Australian experience: a study of race prejudice in Australia*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 1974), pp. 33-4; Humphrey McQueen, *A new Britannia: an argument concerning the social origins of Australian radicalism and nationalism* 2nd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin, 1986), pp. 47-9.

¹⁶ Andrew Markus, *Australian race relations 1788-1993* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994), p. 113.

Both the desire for an improved race, and racial anxieties and fears of invasion, were apparent in the formulation of the "White Australia" policy.¹⁷ Non-European immigration was of particular significance in Queensland, due to widespread debate during the nineteenth century over Melanesian workers in the sugar industry.¹⁸ These factors, combined with the growth of a powerful Labor party in Queensland in the early 1890s, based in part on policies of white Australia, meant that circumstances in Queensland were of great importance in the formulation of the various pieces of legislation which comprised the "White Australia" policy.¹⁹

During the early twentieth century, the Australian government introduced a series of pro-natalist strategies which were aimed at increasing Australia's white population, first in quantity, then in quality.²⁰ Although these legislative initiatives were not officially

¹⁷ McQueen, *A new Britannia*, p. 269; A. T. Yarwood, "The white Australia policy", in Stevens, *Racism*, p. 164; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 225-27.

¹⁸ G. C. Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of north Queensland to 1920* ([Canberra]: Australian National University Press, 1970), pp. 246-47; Clive Moore, *Kanaka: a history of Melanesian Mackay* (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and University of Papua New Guinea, 1985), pp. 131-32; Kay Saunders, "Massa Palmer's black labourer: the fear of social contamination", in Raymond Evans, Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland: a history of exclusion, exploitation and extermination*, 3rd ed. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1993), pp. 150, 156.

¹⁹ Markus, *Australian race relations*, pp. 114, 120; Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), pp. 41-2, 45-8, 50-1; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 221, 227-28.

²⁰ Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and reproductive imperatives", in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, eds, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), p. 158.

associated with the "White Australia" policy, they were informed by similar desires and fears.²¹ As Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain persuasively argue, in a climate of fears that the population was declining, "white babies were a national asset, motherhood a national service."²² That concerns about improving the race were confined to "white" Australians was apparent from the fact that most of these pro-natalist initiatives excluded certain "racial" groups, although there were inconsistencies in the determination of these groups.²³ With the outbreak of World War I, further legislation was stalled. During the 1920s, as population growth increased, the focus of such debates turned to the quality rather than the quantity of the population.²⁴ A range of campaigns, with shifting alliances and shared membership, developed at this time in response to these concerns, including the motherhood and infant welfare movements, education, social purity, urban regeneration and public health, and workplace reforms.²⁵

²¹ Patricia Harris, "Penny-pinching activities: managing poverty under the eye of welfare", in Saunders and Evans, *Gender relations in Australia*, p. 296. Harris argues that racial and eugenic arguments were more important in the development of these strategies than concern for the welfare of children. See also McQueen, *A new Britannia*, p. 269; Rob Watts, *The foundations of the national welfare state* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 45-7. Watts explores a variety of reasons behind the introduction of child endowment (pp. 46-52).

²² Howe and Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce", pp. 168, 171.

²³ Howe and Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce", p. 168; Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 119.

²⁴ Ann Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control: the case of Marion Piddington", *Hecate*, 15, 1 (1989), p. 80; Watts, "Beyond nature and nurture", p. 329.

²⁵ Howe and Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce", pp. 171-72.

Many of these issues were prominent in Queensland.²⁶ During the nineteenth century, there was an unquestioned assumption that the desirable population was white.²⁷ A correspondent to the *Brisbane Courier* stated in 1901 that the community aspired to a white Australia “in every sense of the word”.²⁸ There was a belief in Australia that British “stock” was particularly healthy, representing the “best” population, and again, this was more pronounced in Queensland.²⁹ The general trend in the early twentieth century towards state intervention in infant welfare and scientific mothering was also marked in Queensland in comparison with other states.³⁰ In debate about the white population of Queensland, positive beliefs about improving the race were always attended by fears, or threats, as to what would happen if the race instead deteriorated.

The combination of factors believed to be important to the improvement of the Queensland population, as well as a suggestion of what would happen if improvement did not occur, were evident in an editorial in the *Week* from 1910. It began: “We venture to say – and calmly await

²⁶ David Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland, 1900 to 1930*, PhD thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1999, p. 34; Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915*, p. 233.

²⁷ Raymond Evans, “‘Keep white the strain’: race relations in a colonial setting”, in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland*, p. 9.

²⁸ Evans, “‘Keep white the strain’”, p. 10.

²⁹ “Peopling the empire: the children’s chance in a new land”, *Queenslander*, 15 May 1920, p. 6; “State’s children: good physique: Mr. Mutch’s statement”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 March 1927, p. 8; Evans, “‘Keep white the strain’”, pp. 16–19.

³⁰ “New Health Act: Commissioner of Public Health”, *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane), 1 August 1900, p. 8; Virginia Thorley, *Feeding their babies: infant feeding advice received by Queensland women in the postwar period, 1945–1965*, MA thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 2000, pp. 17–18, 28–9.

contradiction – that ... the population of Australia ... is superior to that of any other country, taken in the same way and on the same terms”.³¹ It continued:

When folk urge us to bring more people into this country, they seldom or never stipulate anything concerning the character of the population to be so introduced. ... Sometimes we get the best; but of late we have been getting a good many folk who have not the hall mark on them.³²

The editorial went on to state that the native born population in “so many ways ... should be, and really it is better than the imported article”.³³ A note of warning was apparent in the *Week*’s list of factors which would maintain a healthy population:

If we attend to public health, as we should attend to it, if we attend to ordinary sanitation affairs, to food supplies, and to healthful recreations, we shall develop a population that is admittedly adapted to the semi-tropical climate of this country.³⁴

The subject of how to achieve the “best” population, whether through selection of the “native born” or of immigrants, touched on concerns which had associations with eugenics. One of the achievements of the eugenics movement was its capacity to focus a range of hitherto unrelated concerns. This editorial also illustrates the almost unconscious assumption that the “native born population” was white.

³¹ “Population of Australia”, *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

³² “Population of Australia”, *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

³³ “Population of Australia”, *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

³⁴ “Population of Australia”, *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

In contrast to the *Week's* prescription for racial improvement was an article in the *Queenslander* which revealed fears about a decline in the national character. The *Queenslander* reported that Sir William MacGregor, the Queensland governor, had recently criticised the loss in the national character of a "sturdy independence and self-reliance", characteristics which he described as the "greatest National assets of all great communities".³⁵ MacGregor blamed this loss on the "present day dependence on the Government to do things for the people which they could do better for themselves".³⁶ The *Queenslander* continued his remarks, criticising the entire policy of the Australian Labor Party for tending

... to destroy that sturdy independence and self-reliance which has made the British race foremost among the nations of the world. ... no outside enemy could strike so severe a blow at the Empire as the enemy within the gates that saps her national character of its greatest asset ...³⁷

Although these comments focused on environmental influences, they revealed that fears about the disappearance of desirable characteristics in the population were evident in Queensland at this time. The newspaper drew parallels between the present day and previous civilisations which had collapsed due to excessive luxury and the destruction of independence and hardihood.³⁸ It was thus apparent that

³⁵ "National character", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20.

³⁶ "National character", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20.

³⁷ "National character", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20.

³⁸ "National character", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20.

these fears were related to beliefs about racial degeneration destroying British, and therefore Australian, civilisation.

Also of interest was the statement of the *Queenslander* that to “help one class at the expense of another is equivalent to taking part of the earnings of one man and giving to the other.”³⁹ This sentiment echoed the common complaint of eugenicists that contemporary governments tended to maintain the unfit at the expense of the fit; literally, as the wages of the fit were squandered on supporting those whose incapacity would otherwise have doomed them to extinction.⁴⁰ Such concerns were not isolated. The *Week* criticised the “ever deepening tendency to cast on one section of the community the partial or entire maintenance of all other sections”, which was “choking philanthropy.”⁴¹ It also criticised the “woful [sic] lack of self reliance in these continual appeals for State aid.”⁴² These articles must be seen as counterparts to more positive reports on the fitness of the Queensland population. Debate about racial fitness in Queensland at this time was constantly informed by anxieties about racial degeneration.

³⁹ “National character”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20.

⁴⁰ Darwin, the newly appointed president of the Eugenics Education Society, argued that taxation had an anti-eugenic effect, because it “tended to force the intelligent and thrifty to support the mentally feeble and the wastrel” (“Improvement of the race: disease as an aid to ‘natural selection’”, *The Times* (London), 2 June 1911, p. 6). See also Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 72-3.

⁴¹ *Week* (Brisbane), 27 May 1910, p. 19.

⁴² *Week* (Brisbane), 27 May 1910, p. 19.

Between 1900 and 1950, beliefs about the desirable characteristics of the population did not alter significantly. In 1918, the Home Secretary, John Huxham, gave a speech at the newly opened baby clinic at West End. Huxham stated that "In the past we looked to the adult immigrant to develop the country, but now we are placing the proper value on the native born of the community."⁴³ This indicated the government's increasing interest in developing a fit, white population in Queensland. A similar attitude was reflected in Sir Raphael Cilento's statement in the 1930s that babies were the best immigrants.⁴⁴ In 1935, in an address to the New Settlers' League, Cilento contended that population depended on youth and vitality.⁴⁵ In this speech, however, he also touched on the reasons which made an increase of population so important. If the population was not maintained, he argued, Australia would be lost, as a more virile nation would invade.⁴⁶ In 1966, Cilento was more explicit about the threat which he perceived if the population was allowed to diminish. He argued that Australia had to preserve its "cultural and political frontiers against an ever increasing pressure by more primitive,

⁴³ Newspaper clipping from the *Observer*, 13 March 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31681, Queensland State Archives.

⁴⁴ Sir Raphael Cilento, speech to the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, undated [1936], p. 1, UQFL MSS 44/90, Box 17, Fryer Library.

⁴⁵ Cilento, opening address to the New Settlers' League, Brisbane, 11 October 1935, p. 2, UQFL MSS 44/93, Box 17, Fryer Library.

⁴⁶ Cilento, opening address to the New Settlers' League, Brisbane, pp. 3-5, UQFL MSS 44/93, Box 17, Fryer Library. See also a later speech, "Brave new world of tomorrow", an address at the Apprentice of the year Scholarship Dinner, Junior Chamber of Commerce Incorporated, 24 August 1960, UQFL MSS 44/74, Box 17, Fryer Library, in which Cilento made many similar points.

but constantly better armed coloured races.”⁴⁷ Cilento continued that limiting the “white” race in a competitive world would lead to “those of our descendants who survive” being enslaved “under more virile coloured rulers.”⁴⁸

Fears that civilisation in Queensland was in danger of collapsing were apparent in much of Cilento’s written work, and in many speeches he gave during this time. In 1936, in a speech entitled “Historical parallels”, he discussed at length the factors which had led to the fall of Rome.⁴⁹ Among them, he identified unemployment and disproportionate state aid for those who could not support themselves. Despite the title of his speech, Cilento appeared somewhat cautious of making any explicit “historical parallels”, stating instead that his audience could draw its own conclusions on the subject.⁵⁰ In later speeches, after his tenure as Director-General of Health and Medical Services in Queensland had ended, Cilento was more overt in stating that he believed society to be degenerating.⁵¹ Cilento’s views were similar to those of many eugenicists. Galton argued that the history of the rise and decline of nations should be investigated, along with links to the contribution of various classes of

⁴⁷ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, an address to the Combined Medical and Legal Associations of the Hunter River Valley – Cessnock, 11 March 1966, p. 5, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

⁴⁸ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 8, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

⁴⁹ Cilento, “Historical parallels”, an address read to the Thirty Club in the absence of Sir Raphael Cilento, 9 June 1936, UQFL MSS 44/80, Box 17, Fryer Library.

⁵⁰ Cilento, “Historical parallels”, p. 25, UQFL MSS 44/80, Box 17, Fryer Library.

⁵¹ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 2, UQFL MSS 44/73; “The predictable periodic revolts of youth”, an address to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 23 July 1970, UQFL MSS 44/84a, Box 17, Fryer Library.

society in these nations.⁵² Saleeby was convinced that unless Britain adopted a national eugenics program, it would succumb to “the fate of all her Imperial predecessors from Babylon to Spain.”⁵³ These arguments were part of broader concerns about the debilitating influence of modern civilisation on national and racial virility. These were also apparent in discourse on women.

In the first half of the twentieth century, women’s roles and responsibilities were largely restricted to child rearing. This fact, however, gave them a central place in eugenic ideology. Women, as mothers, were considered to be responsible for the perpetuation of the white race.⁵⁴ Saleeby, for example, stated that “Woman is Nature’s supreme instrument of the future”.⁵⁵ For this reason, it is unsurprising that women were prominent in the eugenics movement.⁵⁶ Women also

⁵² Francis Galton, “Eugenics: its definition, scope and aims”, in *Essays in eugenics* (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1909), pp. 38-9.

⁵³ Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. x. W. Jethro Brown argued that parallels could be drawn between the degeneration of ancient civilisations and present day Australia (Brown, “Economic welfare and racial vitality”, *Economic Record*, 3, 4 (1927), p. 15). See also *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 January 1910, p. 20; *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 26 March 1910, p. 32; Raymond B. Cattell, *The fight for our national intelligence* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1937), p. 1; W. Duncan McKim, *Heredity and human progress* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1900), p. iii.

⁵⁴ Mary Scharlieb, *Womanhood and race-regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1912), p. 23. George Robb contends that eugenics was inextricably linked with issues of gender (“Eugenics, spirituality and sex differentiation in Edwardian England: the case of Frances Swiney”, *Journal of Women’s History*, 10, 3 (1998), p. 97). This was more generally true for progressive reformers (Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), pp. 65-7; Michael Roe, *Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp. 14-15).

⁵⁵ Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. xiv.

⁵⁶ Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 1; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, human genetics and human failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 7. Nicole Hahn Rafter discusses the fact that many women carried out research for the Eugenics Record Office in America in

constituted a significant part of the audience in both England and America, probably because many eugenics issues were relevant to women's issues, and thus provided an outlet for social activism denied to them in other areas.⁵⁷ Ann Curthoys states that there "were strong links between eugenics and feminism".⁵⁸ The goals of many women involved in birth control campaigns were both feminist and eugenic, although it was the latter that was emphasised in rhetoric, implying that it was the more accepted.⁵⁹ Eugenic ideas almost always focused on women as mothers, rather than as individuals.⁶⁰

In spite of the fact that a white Australia was a masculine, physically proficient ideal,⁶¹ women were central to the "White Australia" policy just as they were to eugenics.⁶² Marriage and motherhood were paramount for Australian women.⁶³ The legacy of the convict system and a

"Introduction", p. 3, in Rafter, ed., *White trash: the eugenic family studies 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988).

⁵⁷ In 1927, an item on the Racial Hygiene Centre was published on the women's page of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 1927, p. 4, indicating that this was seen as an issue relevant to women.

⁵⁸ Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control", p. 73.

⁵⁹ Richard Soloway, "The 'perfect contraceptive': eugenics and birth control research in Britain and America in the interwar years", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30, 4 (1995), p. 642. Also Robb, "Eugenics, spirituality and sex differentiation in Edwardian England", p. 98: feminists often used eugenic arguments to support their cause.

⁶⁰ Judith Smart, "Feminists, flappers and Miss Australia: contesting the meanings of citizenship, femininity and nation in the 1920s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 71 (2001), p. 1.

⁶¹ Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 10.

⁶² Curthoys, "Eugenics, feminism and birth control", p. 73; Joy Damousi, "Marching to different drums: women's mobilisations 1914-1939", in Saunders and Evans, *Gender relations in Australia*, pp. 365-73; Smart, "Feminists, flappers and Miss Australia", p. 1; Thorley, *Feeding their babies*, p. 25.

⁶³ Margaret Anderson, "Good strong girls: colonial women and work", in Saunders and Evans, *Gender relations in Australia*, pp. 229, 232, 239; Stuart Macintyre, *Winners and losers: the pursuit of social justice in Australian history* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 57, 120.

continuing disparity between male and female numbers during the nineteenth century led to the development of masculinist culture in which women were solely valued for their roles in reproduction and the family.⁶⁴ Their duty was to procreate, and their roles were almost entirely confined to the domestic sphere. This situation was more pronounced in Queensland.⁶⁵

In 1900, the *Brisbane Courier* appeared to be concerned that a general decline in women's health could contribute to racial degeneration. In an editorial in the women's section of the newspaper, the *Courier* reported that "Many people are wanting to know just now what is wrong with the health of the younger women of to-day."⁶⁶ Although they had "been brought up on the most approved hygienic principles", they were less healthy than their grandmothers, who had no idea about these principles.⁶⁷ The *Courier* attributed their "overstrained health" to modern women's desire to enter the public arena, thus indicating that this article was intended as an attack on women who attempted to pursue careers.⁶⁸ It was also relevant to general concerns about the degenerative effect of

⁶⁴ Howe and Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce", pp. 158-62.

⁶⁵ Joanne Scott, "Generic resemblances?": women and work in Queensland, 1919-1939, PhD thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1995, pp. 29, 31, 35-8; Kate Spearritt, The poverty of protection: women and marriage in colonial Queensland, 1870-1900, BA (Hons) thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1989, and "The sexual economics of colonial marriage", in Gail Reekie, ed., *On the edge: women's experiences of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1994), pp. 66-79; Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1996), pp. 134-5, 154.

⁶⁶ "Feminine echoes", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 September 1900, p. 9.

⁶⁷ "Feminine echoes", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 September 1900, p. 9.

⁶⁸ "Feminine echoes", *Brisbane Courier*, 1 September 1900, p. 9.

modern civilisation. In 1914, the *Week* reported that Dr Richard Smith, speaking at a conference on race betterment in Battle Creek, Michigan, had stated that “the imperfect type of woman fully was represented by the slight, thin chested, nervous woman, so favoured by fashion at the present time”.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Smith

... did not think ... that there was any real degeneracy in women, as the same physical defects were present in women of all ages. Modern methods of living, he said, had not proved more disastrous to women than to men.⁷⁰

These concerns with women’s health focused on issues of racial fitness. If women’s health generally was degenerating, it could only be seen as detrimental to the fitness of the race as a whole.⁷¹

Women’s role as mothers of the race was also emphasised. In 1910, the *Queenslander* reported approvingly that women in New Zealand were being trained to be “intelligent mothers”, who would be aware of “the paramount importance of the upbringing of future citizens”.⁷² These views proved remarkably persistent. In 1938, the *Courier Mail* reported that Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Bjelke-Petersen, a leading Sydney physical training expert, suggested that a physical fitness campaign be organised for Brisbane factory and office girls, since women who had worked for six

⁶⁹ “Race betterment”, *Week* (Brisbane), 16 January 1914, p. 11.

⁷⁰ “Race betterment”, *Week* (Brisbane), 16 January 1914, p. 11.

⁷¹ Shawn Michelle Smith argues that the emergence of the “New Woman” in the late nineteenth century was construed by many physicians and sociologists as a threat to the perpetuation of the white race (“Baby’s picture is always treasured”, p. 204). Similar views persisted well into the 1930s: “Modern woman responsible for increased divorces”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 8 October 1938, p. 1.

⁷² *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 16 April 1910, p. 16.

or seven years in offices or factories did not have the same qualifications for motherhood as women “living a more natural and active life”.⁷³ Thus, a fitness campaign was only encouraged for women in order to “qualify” them for motherhood. The chapter now turns to debate about how desirable characteristics were to be secured and undesirable ones eliminated, focusing on issues of the birth-rate, marriage and infant welfare. Women were central to all of these debates.

Marriage, the birth-rate and infant welfare

Between 1901 and 1914, the population of Australia increased by over a million.⁷⁴ This figure does not include the Aboriginal population, which was not counted in the census at this time, reflecting the belief that only the white population was important. Macintyre states that although the birth-rate in Australia was not unusually low for an economically developed country, it assumed a particular importance due to its low population density and neighbours perceived as hostile by Australia.⁷⁵ Fears about the declining birth-rate were thus linked to fears about Asian invasion.⁷⁶ Other debates which were influenced by fears of a declining birth-rate were those related to concerns about the lack of virility of Australians and the degenerating influence of modern city living, as compared to the virility of rural life.⁷⁷ The debate about the

⁷³ “Fitness drive urged for working girls: ‘would benefit whole nation’”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 September 1938, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Macintyre, *The succeeding age*, p. 34.

⁷⁵ Macintyre, *The succeeding age*, pp. 34-5.

⁷⁶ Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁷ Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 4-5.

birth-rate thus influenced many other debates which related to ideas about the national character.

The differential birth-rate was central to eugenic ideology.⁷⁸ Much eugenic rhetoric argued that, in the same way that unhealthy cells overcame healthy organisms, "unfit" individuals were rapidly multiplying and overwhelming society.⁷⁹ Galton believed that the tendency of "high civilisation" was to limit fertility in the upper classes.⁸⁰ According to a 1903 book by W. A. Chapple, restraint was only exercised by the best classes, therefore induced sterility or prohibited fertility was "an absolute necessity" for the worst classes.⁸¹ In 1903, the New South Wales Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth-rate and Mortality indicated that the fall in the birth-rate was due to increased use of contraceptives by the upper and middle classes. The commissioners further theorised that this was due to the increasing "selfishness" of women, who were having fewer children because of increased outside interests.⁸² The report of the commission ignored economic and social reasons for limiting size of

⁷⁸ "Eugenics and the population", *The Times* (London), 1 August 1912, p. 8; Catrine Clay and Michael Leapman, *Master race: the Lebensborn experiment in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), p. 15; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 55-6; Soloway, "The 'perfect contraceptive'", pp. 638-39. For a contrasting opinion see Havelock Ellis, *The problem of race regeneration* (London: Cassell, 1911), pp. 60-2.

⁷⁹ Gerald Vincent O'Brien, "Protecting the social body: use of the organism metaphor in fighting the 'menace of the feeble-minded'", *Mental Retardation*, 37, 3 (1999), p. 195.

⁸⁰ Galton, "Eugenics", p. 39.

⁸¹ W. A. Chapple, *The fertility of the unfit* (Melbourne: Whitcomb and Tombs, 1903), p. 125.

⁸² Bacchi, "Evolution, eugenics and women", p. 147; Howe and Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce", p. 168-69.

families, and recommended discouraging the dissemination of information on birth control.⁸³

As the New South Wales commission indicated, fears about the birth-rate were generally accompanied by concerns about infant mortality. In order to increase the population, it was necessary not only to encourage births, but also to make sure that healthy children survived. The infant welfare movement was part of a larger "efficiency" movement which also encompassed science and rational planning.⁸⁴ The advice of experts came to be considered essential in child-rearing.⁸⁵ Dr (later Sir) Frederick Truby King was extremely influential in this area; he promoted pseudo-scientific methods of child rearing, setting out rules from which mothers were not to deviate.⁸⁶ Michael Roe states that J. S. C. Elkington, the commissioner of public health in Queensland between 1909 and 1913, was influenced by King.⁸⁷

Efficiency and ideas about race and motherhood were linked to birth control and sex education campaigns.⁸⁸ By the mid-1920s, eugenic ideas

⁸³ Howe and Swain, "Fertile grounds for divorce", p. 170.

⁸⁴ Thorley, *Feeding their babies*, p. 16.

⁸⁵ Thorley, *Feeding their babies*, p. 18.

⁸⁶ Thorley, *Feeding their babies*, p. 20. As discussed in Chapter 1, King was also an "ardent" eugenicist (Kerreen Reiger, *The disenchantment of the home: modernizing the Australian family 1880-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 195).

⁸⁷ Roe, *Nine Australian progressives*, p. 96.

⁸⁸ Joy Damousi, "Modernism, Socialism and Communism: a gender critique", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 32 (1992), p. 37.

were firmly associated with birth control campaigns in Australia.⁸⁹ International eugenics organisations also supported birth control and sex education.⁹⁰ These debates were also related to eugenic promotion of marriage restrictions in order to encourage the “fit” to breed, and prevent the “unfit” from doing so.⁹¹ Fears of disease, whether inherited or sexually transmitted, also informed discussion of these issues. The popularity of eugenics meant that marriage into an “untainted” family became a subject of polite conversation during the early twentieth century.⁹²

In the *Week* article on the “Population of Australia”, one of the issues which was raised concerned the freedom with which marriage contracts were arranged. The *Week* argued that if a visitor from another planet were to be informed that this “most solemn form of contract” was administered, “even as to its legal portion” by “voluntary associations

⁸⁹ Margaret Conley, “Citizens – protect your birthright!: the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW”, *Bowyang*, 6 (1981), p. 9; Curthoys, “Eugenics, feminism and birth control”, pp. 77-9.

⁹⁰ “Eugenics for the young”, *The Times* (London), 20 January 1912, p. 4; “Racial hygiene: menace of contagion”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1927, p. 12; Bent Sigurd Hansen, “Something rotten in the state of Denmark: eugenics and the ascent of the welfare state”, pp. 46-50, and Nils Roll-Hansen, “Norwegian eugenics”, p. 161, both in Gunnar Broberg and Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the welfare state: sterilization policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996); Saleeby, *Parenthood and race culture*, p. xii; Soloway, “The ‘perfect contraceptive’”, pp. 637-40. As Soloway points out, not all proponents were eugenicists, and in fact some were hostile to eugenic beliefs; nevertheless, birth control campaigns were informed by eugenic ideology (pp. 637-40).

⁹¹ In 1912, Dr A. F. Tredgold told the Eugenics Education Society that marriage should be regulated in order to prevent the propagation of the unfit (“A plea for regulated marriages”, *The Times* (London), 6 February 1912, p. 10). See also “Eugenics and degeneration”, *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4. Ellis also held contrasting views on this subject, pointing out that marriage restrictions would not prevent the “unfit” from procreating (*The problem of race regeneration*, p. 69-70).

⁹² Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, pp. 67-8.

bearing various religious titles", this visitor would inevitably "conclude that State government in Australia is in the hands of lunatics."⁹³ The editorial went on to explain the importance of marriage:

Here is a form of contract on which depends, to such a very large extent, the upbuilding of families, the staple parts of communities; and, therefore, the better development of individual character.⁹⁴

This argument focused on marriage and the family as promoting stability within the community in the present. It did not discuss concerns about breeding a better race by regulating marriage. It did, however, include statistics on the birth-rate, which indicates that there was some concern in the newspaper for future racial fitness. The language in which the birth-rate was discussed contributed to the idea that it was a competition; for example, it was stated that Victoria "scored double our number".⁹⁵ The newspaper also argued that infant health should be investigated, because "the loss of one of these lives is a loss of potential or possible money values."⁹⁶ Thus the birth-rate was seen as a competition with an economic goal. The concept of racial fitness alluded to in this article was focused on the economic productivity of its future citizens.

Not surprisingly, in view of their strong eugenic beliefs, the leaders of the Modernist Association of Queensland supported eugenic restrictions on

⁹³ "Population of Australia", *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

⁹⁴ "Population of Australia", *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

⁹⁵ "Population of Australia", *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

⁹⁶ "Population of Australia", *Week* (Brisbane), 4 February 1910, p. 19.

marriage. In 1912, Douglas Price discussed a speech given at the First International Eugenics Congress in London on the need for “health and heredity certificates” before a marriage could be allowed to take place.⁹⁷ Price strongly supported such a move, telling his readers: “Reclaim the degenerate if you like, but don’t marry him.”⁹⁸ Price’s views were quite clearly focused on the undesirable hereditary consequences of procreating with a “degenerate”. He cited a case of a woman whose first husband was tainted, and consequently all her children with him were sickly, while her second had “a clean pedigree” and thus all her children with him were healthy.⁹⁹ Price was arguing in a specialist journal to a restricted audience, but similar ideas were expressed in newspapers, a more widely read source.

For example, the *Week* reported enthusiastically on a 1910 meeting of the Federation of Women’s Clubs of New York City, where “an almost unanimous vote” had been passed “to urge legislation that will prevent the wrecking of homes through the physical unfitness of parents”.¹⁰⁰ The motion was introduced by Harriet Johnston Wood, who further proposed “that applicants for marriage licences should be required to show certificates from reputable physicians stating that they are free from insanity, dipsomania, tuberculosis, and other hereditary diseases.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ “Et cetera”, *Modernist*, 4 (October 1912), p. 14.

⁹⁸ “Et cetera”, p. 14.

⁹⁹ “Et cetera”, p. 14.

¹⁰⁰ *Week* (Brisbane), 1 April 1910, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ *Week* (Brisbane), 1 April 1910, p. 9.

Advocacy of legislation aimed at restricting marriages to the “fit” was common in Australia before 1930.¹⁰²

In 1913, Dr A. Jefferis Turner asserted in the *Modernist* that the best method of choosing a mate was the most eugenic one.¹⁰³ He argued that there were four points people generally looked for when choosing a mate. The first was health; Turner stated that no-one wanted to marry an invalid and anyone who did was both “wicked” and “foolish”.¹⁰⁴ He also pointed out that the health of the “stock” was more important than the health of the individual, and advocated examining the family history of any prospective partner.¹⁰⁵ The second point was character; again, Turner urged an examination of the “stock”, rather than simply observation of the individual’s characteristics.¹⁰⁶ The third point was beauty. He saw this as eugenic because ugly men desired beauty in women more than handsome ones, thus levelling out the racial average.¹⁰⁷ The final point was intellect and ability, but Turner argued that eugenic reformation was needed in order that this aspect be given greater weight.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Milton Lewis, *Managing madness: psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), p. 129.

¹⁰³ A. Jefferis Turner, “Eugenics”, *Modernist* 10 (October 1913), p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Turner suggested that in this instance, instinct was eugenic, as it diminished the births of irritating people (p. 4).

¹⁰⁷ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 5.

Turner also contended that marriage for money or property was extremely bad from a eugenic point of view, and that the “man who marries for money is sinning against his own children”, and the woman who did so was selling herself.¹⁰⁹ Price expressed similar opinions in an article entitled “Family pride”, stating that the importance of marriage with “good stock” for producing the “best” results in the next generation should be emphasised.¹¹⁰ Price believed that people should be encouraged to enter “eugenic” marriages, and described marrying for money as a “sin against futurity”.¹¹¹ In his 1913 article, Turner contended that a large part of the responsibility for improving the next generation rested with “good mothers” educating and training their children properly.¹¹² Despite the popularity of this idea in theory, no government ever seriously contemplated legislation enforcing such ideas, at least in regard to the white population.¹¹³

Debates about ways to improve the birth-rate were not conspicuous in Queensland at this time. The controversy was more apparent in warnings about the potential effects of the declining birth-rate, or “race suicide”.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Douglas Price, “Family pride”, *Forerunner* 8 (September 1916), p. 25.

¹¹¹ Price, “Family pride”, p. 25.

¹¹² Turner, “Eugenics”, p. 2: he also stated that as a doctor he did not see many bad mothers, but he did see a great many “silly and incompetent” ones.

¹¹³ Chapter Four discussed the application of marriage restriction legislation to the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland.

¹¹⁴ Race suicide was used as an exaggerated synonym for race deterioration; it was intended as a warning of the consequences if birth-rates declined too far (Pearson, *The scope and importance to the state of the science of national eugenics*, p. 39). See also Robert Reid Rentoul, *Race culture; or, race suicide?: a plea for the unborn* (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Company, 1906).

In 1910, the *Queenslander* reported on an article which had been published in the London *Daily News*, which warned that Australia needed more “than the replenishment of population from without, and the best thing for Australia would be a personal proclamation of ex-President Roosevelt’s warnings regarding race suicide.”¹¹⁵ A letter to the newspaper from an agricultural correspondent calling himself “W. G. S. R.” made it clear what would happen if such concerns were not addressed:

If Australians as a nation cannot find the ways and means to develop, inhabit, and intelligently utilise the vast unpopulated areas of this country, undoubtedly Nature’s laws – or those of evolution – will cause a more industrious, intelligent, and progressive people to do so.¹¹⁶

Both warnings that the slow birth-rate meant race suicide, and the suggestion that a rapid increase in population was necessary in order to protect Australia from invasion, were common at the time.

For this reason, it is interesting that in 1912, the *Queenslander* published the views of Mrs. Downing, a Victorian, criticising the “Baby Bonus”. Downing felt this act was degrading to women, “because it takes the most sacred time in a woman’s life and reduces it to the level of low down intrigue; and further, puts vice and virtue on the same footing.”¹¹⁷ These views were explicitly linked to the desire for a better race, as Downing continued, “At the present time, when the thoughtful of the

¹¹⁵ “Australian immigration”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 16 April 1910, p. 38.

¹¹⁶ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 19 March 1910, p. 39.

¹¹⁷ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 July 1912, p. 5.

land are turning their attention to eugenics, there should be no desire to sacrifice quality to quantity.”¹¹⁸ Downing argued that “it would be a more commonsense proposition to give the bonus to mothers of healthy babies at the expiration of their first years.”¹¹⁹ In this instance, eugenics was clearly identified as being related to the quality of the population rather than the quantity. This view is representative of contemporary eugenic ideas overseas, but it represents an anomaly in Australia at this time.¹²⁰ It appears that this correspondent to the *Queenslander* held unusual views, and it is interesting that the newspaper supported them.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, however, the primary interest in the birth-rate displayed in Queensland was to point out that Australia needed to populate in order to be able to defend itself from invasion. In 1925, the *Queenslander* reported that Patterson, a visiting professor of European history, was astonished at the sparsity of the Australian population and the large areas of land devoted to sheep and cattle.¹²¹ In 1929, the *Brisbane Courier* reported a “delicately worded” speech given by the Japanese Consul-General, in which he stated that Australia’s population was too small, and that it should fill up her empty spaces, a sentiment with which the *Courier* agreed.¹²² In a speech to the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, Cilento described the birth-

¹¹⁸ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 July 1912, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 6 July 1912, p. 5.

¹²⁰ Curthoys, “Eugenics, feminism and birth control”, p. 79.

¹²¹ “Need of population: Professor Patterson astonished”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 July 1925, p. 16.

¹²² “A Japanese view”, *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1929, p. 14.

rate as “lamentably small”.¹²³ The decline in population was, according to Cilento, like a slow dripping away of the life blood of the nation; he emphasised that Australia needed population for defence.¹²⁴

Infant welfare was extremely important in Queensland between 1900 and 1950. Issues of race and gender underlay maternal and infant welfare programs: it was considered to be white women’s work to bear and raise healthy children.¹²⁵ In 1910, the *Queenslander* discussed the Lady Chelmsford Milk Institute, describing the “sole aim of the committee” as being “to save infant life”, and also discussing the government’s “crusade for the protection of infant life”.¹²⁶ In 1914, the *Queenslander* expressed concern over statistics published in New Zealand on infant mortality: “It will be seen that Brisbane holds the unenviable notoriety of having the highest rate in the Commonwealth.”¹²⁷ This rate was 81 in 1000, compared to the lowest, 38 in 1000, in Dunedin.¹²⁸ The low rate for Dunedin was partly attributed to the Society for the Health of Women and Children, founded in 1907 by Dr Truby King. The government

¹²³ Cilento, speech to the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, p. 1, UQFL MSS 44/90, Box 17, Fryer Library.

¹²⁴ Cilento, speech to the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, p. 2, UQFL MSS 44/90, Box 17, Fryer Library.

¹²⁵ Laura Doyle, *Bordering on the body: the racial matrix of modern fiction and culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 11; Robb, “Eugenics, spirituality and sex differentiation”, p. 102; Smith, “Baby’s picture is always treasured”, pp. 198, 203-4; Thorley, Feeding their babies, p. 25.

¹²⁶ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 19 March 1910, p. 6. Lady Chelmsford was the wife of a former governor of Queensland.

¹²⁷ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 April 1914, p. 6.

¹²⁸ Statistics for other Australian cities were: 72 in Sydney, 78 in Melbourne and Adelaide, 79 in Perth, and 77 in Hobart.

argued that the results of the movement in saving infant life would justify the expenditure.

The Queensland government continued to place a relatively high priority on maternal and infant welfare throughout the next four decades. In fact, between 1915 and 1932, the only public health area which benefited under Labor governments was that of maternity and infant welfare, under the *Maternity Act* of 1925.¹²⁹ During the late 1910s, there was a renewed interest in infant life protection programs, almost certainly as a result of concerns about racial fitness occasioned by the war.¹³⁰ In 1926, Dr A. Jefferis Turner, who had also been the President of the Queensland Modernist Association, was made the first director of Maternal and Infant Welfare Clinics in Brisbane.¹³¹ By this time, baby clinics had been established at Townsville and Cairns.¹³² In 1939, the welfare of expectant and nursing mothers and young children was described as an important aspect of national fitness.¹³³

¹²⁹ Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), p. 110.

¹³⁰ "Infants' Home, Corinda", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 February 1919, p. 5; "Save the babies", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1920, 7; "Saving infant life", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 5 June 1920, p. 6.

¹³¹ Sir Raphael Cilento, *Medicine in Queensland: a monograph* (Brisbane: Council of the Royal Australian Historical Society of Queensland, 1963), p. 41; Home Secretary to Commissioner of Public Health, South Brisbane, Superintendent, Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases, South Brisbane, Dr A. Jefferis Turner, Medical Director, Child Welfare and Baby Clinics, Wickham Terrace, 28 January 1931, in-letter 94 of 1931, A/3500, Queensland State Archives.

¹³² Sir Raphael Cilento, "Orientations of the white working population of tropical Queensland", extract from *Health*, January and March 1926, pp. 16-17, UQFL MSS 44/124, Box 19, Fryer Library. See also Cilento, "Australia's orientation", reprinted from the *Health Bulletin*, Department of Public Health, Victoria, July-December 1933, p. 19, UQFL MSS 44/113, Box 19, Fryer Library.

¹³³ National co-ordinating council for physical fitness, *Health* 249, pp. 4, 9 January 1939, in-letter 783 of 1939, HHA/10, Queensland State Archives. See also *Queensland*

In 1918, at the opening of a baby clinic in Ipswich Road, the honorary medical officer of the clinic, Dr G. W. F. Paul, gave an address.¹³⁴ Paul stressed that the purpose of the clinics was to help preserve infant life. He believed that many causes of infant death were environmental and could therefore be remedied, and approved of the maternity bonus, although he cautioned that it should be expended on the mother and not the father. Paul listed the causes of post-natal deaths as infectious diseases, the personal failures of parents, mismanagement and intemperate habits. He also supported a vast increase in state intervention in the lives of its citizens in the interests of health, suggesting that children between the ages of fourteen and eighteen should be placed under medical supervision and the control of a Minister for Health. Further, he contended that during the "marriage period", from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, a medical certificate should be required, in order to show that anyone who wished to get married was proved to be free of "transmittable disease".¹³⁵ He continued that "Anyone so affected should be prevented from marrying."¹³⁶

Parliamentary Debates, 194 (2 November 1948-49), pp. 1134-35; Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, pp. 465-66.

¹³⁴ "Care of the child: Health Minister urged: ante-natal bonus suggested by Dr. Paul", newspaper clipping from the *Daily Mail*, 12 March 1918, in-letter not provided, A/31681, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁵ "Care of the child", newspaper clipping from the *Daily Mail*, 12 March 1918, A/31681, Queensland State Archives.

¹³⁶ "Care of the child", newspaper clipping from the *Daily Mail*, 12 March 1918, A/31681, Queensland State Archives.

Paul's discussion of infectious diseases revealed one of the major issues in fears of racial degeneration: venereal disease.¹³⁷ During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Queensland, debate on this subject was limited, even among the medical profession.¹³⁸ The number of European males infected by syphilis who went untreated contributed to the numbers of patients in lunatic asylums.¹³⁹ Lock hospitals were introduced to provide therapy for prostitutes, but the women in these hospitals received similar treatment to that of prison inmates.¹⁴⁰ During World War I, an increased incidence of venereal disease led to debates on the regulation and management of sexuality, helping to increase the national popularity of eugenic ideas.¹⁴¹ The Racial Hygiene Association in New South Wales described venereal disease as "The Great Destroyer" of marriages, children and the racial health of the nation.¹⁴² In 1913, Turner stated in the *Modernist* that good "germs" could be "blighted by poisons during their early development", citing the example of a woman drinking alcohol while she was pregnant, but also discussing syphilis

¹³⁷ Greg Logan, *Sex education in Queensland: a history of the debate since 1900* (Brisbane: Education History Unit, Department of Education, 1991), p. 12.

¹³⁸ Raymond L. Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government to 1919*, MA thesis, History Department, University of Queensland, 1970, p. 272.

¹³⁹ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 273.

¹⁴⁰ Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 275.

¹⁴¹ Damousi, "Marching to different drums", pp. 362, 366; Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 11; Smart, "Feminists, flappers and Miss Australia", p. 2.

¹⁴² Conley, "The Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", p. 10. See for example "Racial hygiene", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1927, p. 12; "Racial hygiene: Judge Bevan's comments", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 June 1927, p. 8; "Sex education: appeal for funds", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1927, p. 13.

with characteristic frankness.¹⁴³ Clinics for the treatment of venereal disease were established in Brisbane in 1919.¹⁴⁴

In Queensland, social purity movements that campaigned for legislation against prostitution, venereal disease, alcohol consumption and the depiction of sex in films and literature had a relatively low profile in the early twentieth century.¹⁴⁵ This situation changed in 1916, when public concern over the incidence of venereal disease was at its height.¹⁴⁶ One of the movements that gained publicity at this time was the White Cross League, founded in Britain in 1883, and established in Sydney in 1901 with Richard Arthur as president and R. H. W. Bligh as organising lecturer.¹⁴⁷ Its aims were to uphold "purity" as a law which was equally binding on men and women, to promote "A Higher Tone of Public Opinion", and to preserve young people from "contamination".¹⁴⁸ The Queensland committee was established in 1917. A similar organisation, the Queensland Council of Public Morality, was founded in 1910.¹⁴⁹ Members of the latter group included the premier D. F. Denham, the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane St Clair Donaldson, the Permanent Head of the Premier's Department E. H. Abell, ex-premier and Lieutenant-Governor Sir Arthur Morgan, ex-attorney-general Sir Arthur

¹⁴³ Turner, "Eugenics", p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁵ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 13; Arthur J. Pullen to Department of Public Instruction, 4 October 1919, in-letter 42440 of 1919, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁴⁸ Pullen to Department of Public Instruction, 4 October 1919, in-letter 42440 of 1919, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁴⁹ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 14.

Rutledge, inspector-general of schools R. H. Roe, senior district inspector of schools Dr John Shirley, and the University Registrar W. S. Cumbrae-Stewart.

The council sent a deputation to the Minister for Public Instruction, Herbert Hardacre, in 1917, with the aim of discussing issues about venereal disease and sex education.¹⁵⁰ Roe, one of the members of this deputation, stated that a major reason for action at this time was the prevalence of venereal disease.¹⁵¹ Dr W. N. Robertson contended that every citizen was “of enormous value to the community” at that time, as Australia had lost so many of its citizens in the war, and its population had been too small even prior to this.¹⁵² Diseases, according to Robertson, were a problem stemming from immorality.¹⁵³ He stated that a man with syphilis might be unable to have children, and if he did, they could be diseased, meaning that “an unhealthy race is being raised up.”¹⁵⁴ A woman suffering from gonorrhea might have a child, but it

¹⁵⁰ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality dealing with a request that prepared pamphlets be sent to all parents of a certain age, Department of Public Instruction, Brisbane, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵¹ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 3, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵² Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 5, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives. Robertson was a respected surgeon who later became the president of the Queensland branch of the British Medical Association and also the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland (Douglas Gordon, “Social, political and economic background to the genesis of the Faculty of Medicine”, in R. L. Doherty, ed., *A medical school for Queensland* (St Lucia: Boolarong Publications, 1986), p. 11).

¹⁵³ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 6, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁴ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 6, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

would probably be born with physical defects, and thus constitute “another burden upon the community.”¹⁵⁵ He believed that these two diseases were ruining the quality of the population and placing burdens on decent, hard-working citizens. Robertson, like many in eugenics organisations, clearly identified venereal disease as a threat to both financial security and racial fitness.¹⁵⁶ Mrs Mason Beatty, the secretary of the Queensland branch of the National Council of Women, was there “to speak in the sacred name of motherhood.”¹⁵⁷ She stated that the work of the council had links “to social relations and to racial hygienics”.¹⁵⁸ Hardacre replied that he was supportive of their aims, but the government did not take any action.¹⁵⁹

In 1919, the Australian White Cross League pressured the Queensland government to give Bligh permission to lecture in Queensland.¹⁶⁰ Arthur Pullen, the secretary of the Queensland branch of the association, claimed that the governments of New Zealand, Tasmania, and South

¹⁵⁵ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 6, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁶ “Eugenics and degeneration”, *The Times* (London), 8 April 1911, p. 4; Mary Cawte, “Cranometry and eugenics in Australia: R. J. A. Berry and the quest for social efficiency”, *Historical Studies*, 22, 86 (1986), p. 40; Evans, *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 129; Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 89; Edgar Schuster, *Eugenics* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1912), pp. 172-73.

¹⁵⁷ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 7, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁵⁸ A. Mason-Beatty, Secretary, National Council of Women of Queensland to Minister for Education, 21 February 1917, in-letter 6279 of 1917, Queensland State Archives. The Queensland branch of the National Council of Women also supported sex education lectures organised by the White Cross League.

¹⁵⁹ Deputation to the Minister from the Council of Public Morality, p. 10, 6 December 1917, in-letter 45785 of 1917, EDU/A184, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶⁰ Arthur J. Pullen to Department of Public Instruction, 4 October 1919, in-letter 42440 of 1919, Queensland State Archives.

Australia had all been very welcoming of Bligh's lecture tours. Pullen further wrote that "I am sure that the crowning crime of our Christian people is the dastardly silence and prudish ideas of the promulgation of sexual hygiene."¹⁶¹ He believed that venereal disease and its consequent "perversion of virility" were "greatest factors we have to face".¹⁶² The Department of Public Instruction granted permission for Bligh to give sample lectures on sex morality to certain Brisbane schools, but did not support a full-scale tour.¹⁶³ After 1921, the White Cross League and Council of Public Morality were largely inactive, due largely to a decline in the incidence of venereal disease.¹⁶⁴ Sex education remained a controversial topic, although many continued to believe that it should be provided by the state, for a variety of reasons.¹⁶⁵

Concerns about improving the white race became more evident in Queensland by the late 1920s. In 1929, Randolph Bedford argued in parliament that the "crop of the world's misery is continuously increasing", and that it was only societal hypocrisy and an outdated adherence to Biblical ideas that prohibited easy divorce.¹⁶⁶ Bedford joked

¹⁶¹ Pullen to Department of Public Instruction, 4 October 1919, in-letter 42440 of 1919, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶² Pullen to Department of Public Instruction, 4 October 1919, in-letter 42440 of 1919, Queensland State Archives.

¹⁶³ J. D. Story, Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction to Pullen, 9 October 1919, in-letter 42410 of 1919, Queensland State Archives; Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ Logan, *Sex education in Queensland*, p. 24.

¹⁶⁵ In 1947, a columnist in the *Courier Mail* advocated that couples about to be married receive a series of lessons on various aspects of marriage, one of which was "sex hygiene": "Stem divorce tide", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 14 March 1947, p. 7.

¹⁶⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

that "from some of the marriages I have seen, if God had joined them together, then He did so when he was not looking."¹⁶⁷ He believed that public opinion would be an obstacle to attempts to make divorce easier in such cases, due to the reluctance of most people to discuss a topic not considered "respectable". This was principally noticeable, according to Bedford, in relation to research into the causes of syphilis, one of the great causes of insanity.¹⁶⁸ Bedford's views on this subject remained consistent. In *Naught to thirty-three*, a biographical work published posthumously in 1944, Bedford argued that quality in a population should be desired more than quantity, claiming that:

The Australian birthrate can be made the most effective on earth, by perfect treatment in infancy, and a generous equipment of life and its duties.¹⁶⁹

In contrast to the rest of Australia, concerns about the quantity of the birth-rate re-emerged in Queensland during the 1940s. In 1946, a *Courier Mail* writer known as the "The Counsellor" urged the need for a realistic attitude towards birth control, as it was practised almost universally, "whenever and wherever children become a burden rather than a blessing to the family."¹⁷⁰ This did not indicate approval for the

¹⁶⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1106.

¹⁶⁸ Syphilis was a major cause of insanity in the early twentieth century (J. F. J. Cade, *Mending the mind: a short history of twentieth century psychiatry* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1979), p. 84; Evans, *Charitable institutions of the Queensland government*, p. 273).

¹⁶⁹ Randolph Bedford, *Naught to thirty-three* (Sydney: The Currawong Publishing Company, 1944), p. 275.

¹⁷⁰ "Realism needed in birth limit controversy", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 February 1946, p. 5. "The Counsellor" generally wrote in the women's section of the paper, but this article was published with general news items.

practice, however, as the writer continued, under the sub-heading "Population need", that "our very existence and the existence of our children depends on our increase in population."¹⁷¹ The author argued that widespread birth control meant a "dangerous limitation of population".¹⁷² Due to the current rise in the birth-rate, many people were becoming complacent about population levels, but this rise was a temporary situation occasioned by the war, which might not continue into peace time. The only recommendation for birth control suggested in the article was that it was a better alternative than abortion, a procedure that, according to "The Counsellor", caused a "staggering" loss "of potential lives" every year in Australia.¹⁷³ The writer concluded that:

Whether there is a constant stream of healthy babies coming on to replenish manhood or whether birth control dangerously limits our families depends almost entirely on whether it becomes an economic and social advantage or a disadvantage to have a large family. That, in its turn, depends on the legislation enacted for maternal, child, and family welfare.¹⁷⁴

The *Courier Mail* published a letter to the editor the following day in response to this article, from "Medicus", at Wickham Terrace, who had sent in a cutting from the *British Medical Journal*.¹⁷⁵ The cutting stated that the British Royal Commission on population had found that it was a

¹⁷¹ "Realism needed in birth limit controversy", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 February 1946, p. 5.

¹⁷² "Realism needed in birth limit controversy", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 February 1946, p. 5.

¹⁷³ "Realism needed in birth limit controversy", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 February 1946, p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ "Realism needed in birth limit controversy", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 February 1946, p. 5.

¹⁷⁵ "Birth rate fall", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 2 February 1946, p. 2.

mistake to focus on contraceptive methods as a problem in themselves, as this would not reveal reasons for their use. The fall in the birth-rate was due to "some deeper underlying factor."¹⁷⁶ In 1964, Phyllis Cilento revealed many similar attitudes towards the birth-rate, arguing that "We need every new Australian born to us", and that in contrast to other countries, Australia was in need of a "population explosion", in order to ensure future development and progress.¹⁷⁷

In a 1947 article published in the *Courier Mail*, Mrs E. A. Waterworth, speaking at a public meeting held by the National Council of Women of Tasmania, made a link between the falling birth-rates of "white" races and racial anxieties.¹⁷⁸ The meeting was held to gain support for re-establishing the State Film Censorship Board in Tasmania. The association between declining birth-rates and racial fears was made in a circular prepared by Waterworth on the problem of film censorship, which was her primary concern.¹⁷⁹ Under the sub-heading "Protect children", the article reported that Waterworth's circular stated:

While the birthrates of the white races (except Russia) are falling, ... the ever-growing native peoples, with a rising consciousness of their power, look upon the white man's portrayal of himself in his moving pictures. How can he respect us?¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ "Birth rate fall", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 2 February 1946, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ Phyllis D. Cilento, *Enjoy your family: a guide for parenthood* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1964), pp. 7-9. See also Phyllis Cilento, *Plan your family: practical birth control* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1965).

¹⁷⁸ "Films no. 2 'evil'", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 21 January 1947, p. 6. Waterworth was a former Queensland school teacher, and was described in the article as a "keen worker for child welfare".

¹⁷⁹ "Films no. 2 'evil'", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 21 January 1947, p. 6.

¹⁸⁰ "Films no. 2 'evil'", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 21 January 1947, p. 6.

Waterworth thus combined fears about the falling birth-rate with ideas about the place of the “white” race in the world. It is interesting that concerns about a declining birth-rate continued in Queensland even into the “baby boom” era. The second article implied that such concerns continued to have implications of racial anxieties.

After 1940, ideas about fitness in the population moved away from discussions of inherited racial fitness and became more focused on individual fitness as it contributed to national fitness. Many of the concerns expressed at this time were, however, similar to those articulated in earlier decades. It was noted in Chapter One that a significant exception to this trend was Sir Raphael Cilento, and, to a lesser extent, Dr Phyllis Cilento, his wife. Both were influential and energetic figures in Queensland from the 1920s onwards. Hence some examination of their views, although expressed outside the time period of this thesis, is essential. In 1966, Raphael Cilento argued that population was an important factor in political dominance, and thus the falling birth-rate in the western world would lead to race suicide.¹⁸¹ He described the contraceptive pill as the “most recent agent of race suicide”, and cautioned:

Remember too, that it is THE INTELLIGENT who use the “pill”; and that it is THE UPPER CLASSES THAT OVERWHELMINGLY SEEK AND SECURE AN ABORTION [emphasis in original].¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 4, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

¹⁸² Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 4, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

Cilento believed that all civilisations reached a point when rapid depopulation began, continuing “Auto-genocide, or race suicide, growing from a light-hearted limitation of births” would begin, and rapidly grow “until it first DOMINATES and then DESTROYS the culture or civilization it invades.”¹⁸³ Race suicide was the clearest indication of the impending collapse of a civilisation, unless there was a national re-birth.¹⁸⁴ This was usually only possible if there was a “sufficiently open menace”.¹⁸⁵ Phyllis Cilento was much less extreme in her views, but she also believed that quality as well as quantity was important in the population, stating that: “It is the careless, the shiftless and the irresponsible who produce hosts of children haphazardly without thought for mother or the coming baby.”¹⁸⁶ Ideas on the birth-rate, infant and maternal welfare, the role of women as mothers of the race, and potential racial degeneration were all evident in discussions over the white settlement in the tropics.

The “white” race in the tropics

The effect of the tropical and sub-tropical climate of Queensland on racial fitness was an issue of particular importance in the state.

¹⁸³ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 2, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library; emphasis in original.

¹⁸⁴ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 4, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

¹⁸⁵ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 4, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

¹⁸⁶ Cilento, *Enjoy your family*, pp. 7-9, 11-12.

Concerns about the degenerative effect of tropical climates on whites were prevalent in Australia in the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁷ The settlement of north Queensland was one of the most successful examples of European settlement in a tropical area, but its development was plagued by anxiety.¹⁸⁸ Concerns about the Australian climate had been assuaged by the early twentieth century, but the Queensland climate was still considered potentially degenerative.¹⁸⁹ In addition to these fears, the fact that the north of Queensland comprised almost half the land area of the state, and yet was consistently underpopulated in comparison with other areas led to fears of the “empty north”, and possible invasion from Asian countries.¹⁹⁰ These concerns were apparent before the First World War, and continued throughout the period under review. In the inter-war period, many people became interested in promoting the tropics as habitable for the white race, including Raphael Cilento.¹⁹¹ This debate encompassed beliefs about racial improvement, and fears of racial degeneration. Discussion on the subject often entailed debate about

¹⁸⁷ Cilento and Lack, *Triumph in the tropics*, p. 422; Walker, *Anxious nation*, p. 14.

¹⁸⁸ Bolton, *A thousand miles away*, p. vii; Cilento and Lack, *Triumph in the tropics*, p. 421.

¹⁸⁹ These concerns focused on the tropical heat of northern Queensland, and had a racial aspect, as it was believed that the heat made living conditions in the north unsuitable for Europeans (Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, pp. 73-6); there were also practical concerns about tropical disease (Anderson, pp. 77-9).

¹⁹⁰ Peter Crossman, Martin Bell, Richard Jackson, Claire Runciman, Norm Elridge, Jim Skinner and John Western, *Migration, population growth and regional development in Queensland* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993), pp. 54-5; forty-three percent of the land area of Queensland is tropical; in 1986, only eighteen percent of the population lived in the tropics. See also Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 116, 164, 173; D. Hastings Young, *A white Australia: is it possible?: the problem of the empty north* (Melbourne: Robertson and Mullen, 1922), p. 13.

¹⁹¹ See, for example, Cilento, *The white man in the tropics: with especial reference to Australia and its dependencies* (Melbourne: H. J. Green, Government Printer, 1925), and *Climatic conditions in North Queensland as they affect the health and virility of the people* (Brisbane: A. J. Cumming, Government Printer, 1923).

heredity and control of reproduction, which reflected the influence of eugenic ideology.

The health of the white population in the tropics was an extremely important issue.¹⁹² In 1909, Turner presented a paper to the Queensland branch of the British Medical Association, stating:

We hear a good deal at the present time about filling the north of Australia with a white population. How far this policy will prove a success depends mostly on the health of the second and succeeding generations of these immigrants.¹⁹³

It was views such as these, arguing that the major barrier to the successful settlement of the tropics by the white race was health, that provided the impetus for the establishment of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine at Townsville in 1910.¹⁹⁴ The idea of founding such an institute was first put forward in 1902 at the Medical Congress in Hobart, by Dr George Frodsham, an Anglican bishop from north Queensland.¹⁹⁵ Frodsham's plan received support from a number of people,¹⁹⁶ and was adopted in 1908.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² Fedora Fisher, "The role of Sir Raphael Cilento in the founding and development of the faculty of medicine", in Doherty, *A medical school for Queensland*, p. 17.

¹⁹³ Quoted in M. J. Thearle, "Dr A. J. Turner and the Queensland leech worm story", in Thearle, ed., *People, places and pestilence: vignettes of Queensland's medical past* (Brisbane: Department of Child Health, University of Queensland, 1986), p. 30.

¹⁹⁴ Bashford, "Is White Australia possible?", pp. 248-49.

¹⁹⁵ Lorraine Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", in Roy MacLeod and Donald Denoon, eds, *Health and healing in tropical Australia and Papua New Guinea* (Townsville: James Cook University Press, 1991), p. 38.

¹⁹⁶ For example, "Tropical medicine", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 February 1908, p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", p. 39.

The Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine was instituted not only for humanitarian and medical reasons, but also as a vehicle for the extension of European culture in the north.¹⁹⁸ This fact was prominent in debate about its establishment.¹⁹⁹ There were hopes that an Australian would be appointed as director, although the *Queenslander* reported the view of English experts that this would be unwise.²⁰⁰ The job was given to Anton Breinl, an Austrian scientist working in Britain, and a promising tropical medical researcher.²⁰¹ The research efforts of the institute were consistently directed towards facilitating permanent white settlement in tropical Australia, sometimes at the expense of directions which Breinl would have preferred to pursue.²⁰² Breinl did provide a report at the Australian Medical Congress of 1920, held in Brisbane, demonstrating that research at the institute indicated that health problems for Europeans in the north of Australia were not significant.²⁰³ In 1921 he resigned as director, due to a variety of pressures. There was a succession of directors after Breinl's resignation, until Cilento was appointed in 1922; he remained in the position until 1930.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", p. 35; Nikki Henningham "Hats off, gentlemen, to our Australian mothers!': representations of white femininity in North Queensland in the early twentieth century", *Australian Historical Studies*, 32, 117 (2001), p. 314.

¹⁹⁹ "Tropical medicine", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 February 1908, p. 35; "The school of tropical medicine", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 January 1910, p. 32.

²⁰⁰ "The tropical school of medicine", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 May 1908, p. 32.

²⁰¹ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", p. 40.

²⁰² Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", p. 41.

This is not to suggest that Breinl did not generally support the aims of the "White Australia" policy; see Cilento, "Australia's heritage: health and building in tropical Australia: themes", pp. 5-6, UQFL MSS 44/45, Box 14, Fryer Library.

²⁰³ Courtenay, "The white man and the Australian tropics", p. 61.

²⁰⁴ Harloe, "Anton Breinl and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine", p. 45; A. T. Yarwood, "Sir Raphael Cilento and *The white man in the tropics*", in MacLeod and Denoon, *Health and healing*, p. 51.

Queensland tended to be particularly defensive about the effect of climate on racial fitness, no doubt reflecting the fact that fears about the potential effect were widespread in the state. In 1910, the views of an American journalist sparked a debate over the effect of the Australian climate on the character of the white race. The journalist, John Foster Fraser, blamed the “languorous climate” for the “slackness and flaccidity” of young Australians.²⁰⁵ Fraser was an English writer, and the author of *Australia: the making of a nation*, in which he stated that Australia was “an eastern country inhabited by men from the west”.²⁰⁶ Fraser’s views prompted angry responses in the Queensland press, including one in the *Week*, which began “Latterly, we have been hearing a lot about the supineness of the Australian, and the enervating influences and effects of the Australian climate”.²⁰⁷ It argued that anyone expressing this unflattering view would only have to be shown a football match or a political meeting to realise its falsity. The *Queenslander* quoted T. A. Coghlan, the Agent-General for New South Wales, who pointed to “the proficiency of Australians in athletics” as a refutation of claims of the enervating effect of the Australian climate.²⁰⁸ Coghlan also denied the inferiority, in either energy or enterprise, of Australian workers as compared to English. These statements reflected views that the most desirable citizen was physically fit. They implied that racial

²⁰⁵ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 April 1910, p. 13.

²⁰⁶ Walker, *Anxious nation*, p. 9.

²⁰⁷ *Week* (Brisbane), 1 April 1910, p. 19.

²⁰⁸ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 April 1910, p. 13.

degeneration could not be occurring as long as Australians remained physically active.

The suitability of tropical environments for white settlement and labour was a major issue in the nineteenth century, and was part of the motivation for the importation and then repatriation of non-white immigrants.²⁰⁹ The issue of Melanesian labour was a controversial one, due to business interests in cheap labour in the sugar industry.²¹⁰ It was argued that "coloured" labour, introduced on short-term contracts, was essential for the development of the north, which was subsequently to be populated by whites, and thus protected against invasion.²¹¹ Queensland was plagued by racial tensions, however, and in 1901 the government voted strongly to end the recruitment of Melanesian workers.²¹² In fact, when the various pieces of legislation which constituted the "White Australia" policy were formulated, Melanesians were the only immigrant group singled out for deportation.²¹³ The criteria for deportation ignored

²⁰⁹ Crossman, Bell, Jackson, Runciman, Elridge, Skinner and Western, *Migration, population growth and regional development in Queensland*, p. 55; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 135.

²¹⁰ Kay Saunders, *Workers in bondage: the origins and bases of unfree labour in Queensland 1824-1916* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), pp. 144-62. See also Patricia Mercer, who argued that attitudes towards Pacific Island labourers in Queensland were complex; although there was hostility towards them from the beginning of their recruitment in the 1860s, contradictory images were circulated ("Racial attitudes towards Melanesians in colonial Queensland", in Henry Reynolds, ed., *Race relations in north Queensland* (Townsville: James Cook University Press, 1978), especially pp. 304-9).

²¹¹ Bolton, *A thousand miles away*, pp. 198-200; Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland*, p. 198; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 100, 103-4; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, p. 193.

²¹² Bolton, *A thousand miles away*, p. 249; Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 117.

²¹³ A. T. Yarwood states that the *Pacific Island Labourers' Act* of 1906, the second major act of the "White Australia" policy, was the closest approach to the specific

the reality that many Melanesians were firmly established residents of the country, and instead showed the government's clear desire for the deportation of all Melanesians.²¹⁴ In order to ensure racial purity, the government was prepared to subsidise industries suffering from the lack of cheap labour.²¹⁵

The question of whether whites could ever work effectively in the tropics was thus contentious. Concerns about white labour in north Queensland were not solely focused on climatic effects, but also on the racial implications of white men and women pursuing work considered "unfit" for white people.²¹⁶ One of the results of these anxieties was that such labour was reconceptualised as essential for survival and health in the tropics.²¹⁷ Cilento argued in *Triumph in the tropics* that the health of Europeans living in the north of Australia in fact improved in proportion to the amount of physical labour performed.²¹⁸ Work was promoted as the secret for overcoming the effects of the sub-tropical climate, and this was particularly the case for women. In 1920, the *Queenslander* stated

exclusion of a particular racial group of any "White Australia" initiatives ("The white Australia policy", p. 164). See also Gibb, *The making of "white Australia"*, p. 126-28.

²¹⁴ Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 117; Moore, *Kanaka*, p. 131. Despite this, moves to deport all Melanesians in Queensland were not successful (Saunders, *Workers in bondage*, pp. 165-68).

²¹⁵ Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 117; Moore, *Kanaka*, p. 132; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 185-86.

²¹⁶ Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, p. 85; Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 18; Saunders, *Workers in bondage*, pp. 157-58; Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, pp. 193, 207.

²¹⁷ Bashford, "Is White Australia possible?", p. 254; Henningham, "Representations of white femininity in North Queensland", p. 318.

²¹⁸ Cilento and Lack, *Triumph in the tropics*, p. 439.

that, according to a Mrs Perreau, who was lecturing on her experiences in northern Australia:

The main consideration regarding all such tropical areas as that of the Northern Territory is the effect they have upon the health of the white immigrant from more temperate climes. One often hears it said that they are not fit for white men to live in; and the majority of those who consider that white men who look after themselves and take ordinary precautions can keep healthy in the hot lands maintain that they are altogether unsuitable for women and children – or at least for women and girls.²¹⁹

The article then continued that when asked if there was one “secret” for “beating the climate”, Perreau’s advice was simple: “The answer may be given in one word: Work.”²²⁰ Perreau also encouraged young women “to engage in vigorous outdoor sports in order to keep themselves in good health.”²²¹ This reflects not only the belief that work was essential for the health of the white race in the tropics, but also the view which had become common by the 1920s that the north Queensland climate was suitable, even healthy for white men, but not for white women.²²² The issue of women as mothers of the race assumed an important place in debates over the suitability of the tropics for “white” habitation.²²³ There were concerns that the health and fitness of white women living in the

²¹⁹ “Women in the north: hygienic value of work”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 8.

²²⁰ “Women in the north”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 8.

²²¹ “Women in the north”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1920, p. 8.

²²² Henningham, “Representations of white femininity in North Queensland”, p. 312.

²²³ North Queensland was a strongly masculinist region, and women were seen as a civilising influence, although their supposed duty as mothers of the future white race remained paramount, to an even greater extent than in the south of the state (Pauline Cahir, “Women in north Queensland”, in *Lectures on north Queensland history*, pp. 100–1, 110–11, 114).

north were degenerating, and that these women would be unable to produce healthy offspring.²²⁴ In 1919, one doctor expressed concern in the *Melbourne Herald* that “a race of comparative imbeciles and physical degenerates” was being bred in the tropics “instead of a dominant white race”.²²⁵

The debate over the effect of the Queensland climate on Europeans continued throughout the 1910s. In 1920, white settlement in the tropics was the main topic of discussion at the Australasian Medical Congress, held in Brisbane.²²⁶ The resolution of the congress supported such settlement.²²⁷ In 1923, Professor Ellsworth Huntington, a Research Associate in Geography at Yale University, attended the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia, and subsequently published an account of his visit to Australia in the book *West of the Pacific*.²²⁸ Huntington argued that white people born in low latitudes tended to have less physical vitality than those born in more temperate climates, using Queensland data to support his contentions.²²⁹ Huntington’s book prompted a response from C. H. Wickens, the Commonwealth Statistician. Wickens did not attack Huntington’s theory directly, but confined himself to arguing that the evidence available for Queensland

²²⁴ Bashford, “Is White Australia possible?”, pp. 264-65.

²²⁵ Quoted in Henningham, “Representations of white femininity in North Queensland”, p. 317.

²²⁶ Young, *A white Australia*, p. 15.

²²⁷ Cilento and Lack, *Triumph in the tropics*, p. 437.

²²⁸ Huntington, *West of the Pacific* (New York: Scribner, 1925).

²²⁹ C. H. Wickens, “Vitality of white races in low latitudes”, *Economic Record*, 3, 4 (1927), p. 117.

did not support it.²³⁰ Wickens' job gave him a personal interest in the subject; he cited evidence from the Census Bulletin on Tropical Australia issued by his own department, as well as the work of the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Townsville, to support his argument that Queenslanders enjoyed good health. Wickens' main point of contention was with Huntington's assertion that the "birth in Queensland of persons of white race increases the rate of mortality and decreases the fertility of the race."²³¹ Wickens felt that the disagreement largely came down to differing interpretations of statistics. Huntington argued that immigrants to the state were responsible for the low death rate and high fertility rate overall in Queensland, but if statistics were taken for those born in the state, they would be much worse; Wickens disagreed.²³²

Huntington's argument was differed somewhat from the usual assertion that the climate was responsible for the physical deterioration of the white inhabitants of the north. He did not claim that the Queensland born were not healthy, but that this was true "*in spite of* a climatic handicap"; he attributed the "health and vigour" of the Queensland population to "a highly favourable process of selection".²³³ He agreed, therefore, that those living in Queensland, and particularly tropical Queensland, were unusually healthy. Huntington argued that, because

²³⁰ Wickens, "Vitality of white races in low latitudes", p. 117.

²³¹ Wickens, "Vitality of white races in low latitudes", p. 118.

²³² Wickens, "Vitality of white races in low latitudes", p. 118.

²³³ Ellsworth Huntington, "Natural selection and climate in northern Australia", *Economic Record*, 5, 9 (1929), p. 186; emphasis in original.

of natural selection, Queensland-born infants were exceptionally healthy in their first year, but that the mortality rate rose after this, until it reached similar levels to the rest of Australia; the only adequate explanation Huntington could see for this was the effect of climate.²³⁴

Those who promoted white settlement and labour in the tropics did so out of a conviction that the population of the north of Queensland was essential for Australia's security. Randolph Bedford wrote in *Lone Hand* in 1911 that Australia had a chance to breed "a pure race in a clean continent".²³⁵ In 1917, R. Hamlyn-Harris, the President of the Royal Society of Queensland, and a fellow of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine, told the society that Queenslanders were becoming specifically adapted to a tropical climate, and could "make Queensland the cradle of a new breed".²³⁶ He believed that they should foster "clannishness", through the preservation of racial exclusiveness.²³⁷ Both Harris's and Huntington's contentions reflected the belief that an unusually rigorous process of natural selection had led to the white population native to north Queensland being particularly healthy. Huntington argued that "Queensland mothers, and the fathers to a lesser extent, represent a highly selected and unusually vigorous group."²³⁸

²³⁴ Huntington, "Natural selection and climate in northern Australia", p. 200.

²³⁵ Quoted in Walker, *Anxious nation*, p. 83.

²³⁶ Quoted in Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 9.

²³⁷ Evans, "Keep white the strain", p. 9.

²³⁸ Huntington, "Natural selection and climate in northern Australia", p. 191.

Cilento, perhaps more than any other individual, devoted a great deal of time to disproving the idea that white men and women could not settle in the tropics. In 1926, he stated that an examination of 2080 school children in tropical Queensland had found that there were no significant differences between children born in the tropics and children who had moved there, and that there was no sign of mental deterioration.²³⁹ He argued that the belief that tropical Australia was worthless because white men could not live there could be attributed to the fact that white men had died in great numbers in other tropical countries.²⁴⁰ This fear, according to Cilento, failed to take into account the fact that "tropical Australia had no teeming coloured native population riddled with disease."²⁴¹

In 1933, in an essay entitled "Australia's orientation", and published in the Victorian Health Department's Bulletin, he claimed that white people could thrive in the tropics without dependence on black labour, and that the women were not infertile.²⁴² His reasons for arguing the subject so strongly were partly based on his firm beliefs that the tropical climate was not detrimental to white health. His attitudes were also informed by beliefs about the value of maintaining a white Australia, and fears about

²³⁹ Sir Raphael Cilento, "Orientations of the white working population of tropical Queensland", extract from *Health*, January and March 1926, pp. 16-17, UQFL MSS 44/124, Box 19, Fryer Library. See also Cilento, "Australia's orientation", p. 24, UQFL MSS 44/113, Box 19, Fryer Library.

²⁴⁰ Cilento, "Australia's heritage", pp. 1-2, UQFL MSS 44/45, Box 14, Fryer Library.

²⁴¹ Cilento, "Australia's heritage", pp. 1-2, UQFL MSS 44/45, Box 14, Fryer Library.

²⁴² Cilento, "Australia's orientation", pp. 20-3, UQFL MSS 44/113, Box 19, Fryer Library.

what would happen if the racial “purity” of the country was not sustained. This was made plain when he contended that the tropics had to be populated so that Australia could be permanently held for the white race, which Cilento saw as a “high destiny”.²⁴³ He reiterated these statements at many different times during his career.²⁴⁴

Another individual who produced similar arguments for the population of the tropics was Bedford. In fact, Bedford had been arguing that the Australian heat was life-giving rather than enervating long before the argument was more generally taken up.²⁴⁵ Bedford contended that the Australian heat, even in tropical Queensland, had nothing in common with tropical Asia, and was distinctive to the country rather than generically tropical. In *Explorations in civilization*, Bedford observed what he termed the “sloth” of whites who had long been associating with blacks in Ceylon, and added that it made the “hope that Australia will keep herself white” become “almost fanatic.”²⁴⁶ He expressed a common view among those who were concerned with peopling the Australian tropics with Europeans when he stated that slave owners were worse than slaves, and that white people who used slave labour became lazy and demoralised, while the women were unfit for maternity.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Cilento, “Australia’s orientation”, p. 27, UQFL MSS 44/113, Box 19, Fryer Library.

²⁴⁴ See for example Cilento, “The future of tropical settlement”, 1929/30, UQFL MSS 44/117, Box 19, Fryer Library. Cilento at this time was the Director of the Division of Tropical Hygiene.

²⁴⁵ Walker, *Anxious nation*, pp. 150-51, 157-58.

²⁴⁶ Randolph Bedford, *Explorations in civilization* (Sydney: Sydney Day, 191-), p. 16.

²⁴⁷ Bedford, *Explorations in civilization*, p. 16.

The protection and reproduction of the white race in the north was seen as a matter of national security.²⁴⁸ In 1914, the Dominions Commission on Immigration argued that Australia's population should be built up for defence purposes.²⁴⁹ The proposal to populate northern Australia for defence was reinforced by the threat of Japanese invasion in World War II.²⁵⁰ As late as 1950, the idea that the development of northern Australia was essential for defence continued in Queensland.²⁵¹ In this year, E. Riordan, the member for Flinders, moved in Queensland parliament that the development of North Queensland be considered relevant to the Defence portfolio and subsidised accordingly.²⁵² Riordan argued that it was an issue of particular importance for development in Queensland, continuing that although "for fifty years we had been discussing the menace of our little yellow neighbours up in the islands", nothing had been done to develop defence in northern Queensland.²⁵³ His statements revealed that fears of invasion and racial anxieties continued to inform policies of populating north Queensland. W. Ewan believed that the

²⁴⁸ Henningham, "Representations of white femininity in North Queensland", p. 315; Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland*, p. 198.

²⁴⁹ "Dominions Commission and immigration", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 February 1914, p. 20.

²⁵⁰ Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, p. 226.

²⁵¹ D. J. Murphy, "Agriculture 1932-57", in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, eds, *Labor in power: the Labor party and governments in Queensland, 1915-57* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 213.

²⁵² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (14 September 1950-51), p. 394.

²⁵³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (14 September 1950-51), p. 394. G. Nicklin responded that it was extreme to say nothing had been done.

development of north Queensland was essential both for defence and for economic reasons.²⁵⁴

Later in the year, in discussing the Tully Falls Hydro-electric Project Bill, Hanlon contended that it was essential to convince southern states that their safety depended on developing and populating north Queensland.²⁵⁵ Hanlon criticised a focus on immediate economic advantage at the expense of long-term gain. Nicklin attacked the government, and particularly Hanlon, arguing that Hanlon had previously been prepared to give away Papua New Guinea to Germany, and that this would have had an adverse effect on north Queensland. Hanlon responded that he “would sooner have white people there than the Japs”.²⁵⁶ T. Aikens, the member for Mundingburra, said that the government had failed to maintain population levels in the north of the state because it had not provided work for men, or decent conditions for women and children.²⁵⁷ Aikens continued that residents of north Queensland were not “treated as white human beings should be treated”, but rather “the Labor Government have consistently treated the people of North Queensland as semi-civilised blackfellows.”²⁵⁸ In 1961, Cilento again criticised the prejudice against tropical settlement, and the arguments that stated that “the white man deteriorated progressively as

²⁵⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (21 September 1950-51), p. 466.

²⁵⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 118 (18 October 1950), pp. 728-29.

²⁵⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (18 October 1950-51), p. 732.

²⁵⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (18 October 1950-51), p. 736.

²⁵⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 198 (18 October 1950-51), p. 736.

he approached the equator”, although there were few dissenting opinions by this time.²⁵⁹ Cilento recommended enlisting the youth of Australia to conquer the north of the country.²⁶⁰ These debates reveal the extent to which racial tensions and beliefs about improving the race continued to inform debate even into the late 1940s and beyond.

Immigration

There was no consensus in the international eugenics movement about the issue of the assimilation of immigrants and any non-white “races” into society.²⁶¹ In fact, it was a subject which, more than others, caused major divisions in eugenics organisations. Concerns about immigration and related racial issues were complex. In the course of debate about immigration in Queensland at this time, many opinions were expressed about the type of immigrants considered desirable in the state. Often these focused on selecting immigrants based on their potential contribution to future racial fitness, thus displaying ideas which, for the purposes of this thesis, are identified as eugenic.

²⁵⁹ Cilento, *Medicine in Queensland*, p. 11. The belief that the tropics were unsuitable for white habitation was remarkably persistent (Courtenay, “The white man and the Australian tropics”, p. 64).

²⁶⁰ Cilento, “Auto-genocide and synthetic man”, p. 9, UQFL MSS 44/73, Box 17, Fryer Library.

²⁶¹ Hasian, *The rhetoric of eugenics*, p. 49; Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, pp. 65-6; R. Grant Steen, *DNA and destiny: nature and nurture in human behaviour* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1996), pp. 42-3.

Immigration legislation introduced in America was blatantly racist.²⁶² At the 1935 International Congress for Population Science, held in Berlin in 1935, a speech and various exhibits sent by Harry Laughlin, an American delegate who was unable to attend, illustrated that America had founded its immigration policy on biological principles.²⁶³ In 1914, the *Queenslander* reported that the United States was considering the “problem” of immigration from Asian countries, and believed that it could be solved by raising the standard of admission “in order to exclude aliens who are unable to pass the standard of physical fitness required by the United States army.”²⁶⁴ The newspaper further reported that “It is understood that the Secretary for Labour approves of action on the lines already taken in Australia.”²⁶⁵ Although the *Queenslander* may have been exaggerating the extent of Australian influence, there is no doubt that the Australian *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 was a repressive piece of legislation, and one which encompassed fears for racial purity.²⁶⁶ This act was in force between 1901 and 1949, and was the first and basic act of the “White Australia” policy.²⁶⁷

²⁶² Horward Horwitz, “Always with us”, *American Literary History*, 10, 2 (1998), p. 323.

²⁶³ Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi connection: eugenics, American racism, and German National Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 34.

²⁶⁴ “Exclusion of aliens: action in the United States”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 31 January 1914, p. 13.

²⁶⁵ “Exclusion of aliens”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 31 January 1914, p. 13.

²⁶⁶ Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, pp. 90-1; Bashford, “Is White Australia possible?”, p. 257; Gibb, *The making of “white Australia”*, pp. 116-18.

²⁶⁷ A. C. Palfreeman, *The administration of the White Australia Policy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), p. 81.

By 1888, all Australian colonies had placed restrictions on Chinese immigration.²⁶⁸ Support for immigration restriction based on racial factors came from all classes and all colonies in the country.²⁶⁹ The debate in federal parliament in 1901 was not over whether non-Europeans should be excluded, but instead focused on the form the legislation should take; that is, a direct or indirect approach.²⁷⁰ Direct legislation excluding certain racial groups was not favoured by the British government, which was worried about offending Asian governments, and especially the Japanese, who were British allies.²⁷¹ Although the Australian Labor Party supported the direct form of legislation in 1901, it was the indirect form which was eventually adopted.²⁷² This was done through the introduction of a requirement for a dictation test in a European language.²⁷³ The test could be administered to any immigrant during their first year of residence.

Between 1900 and 1950, immigration was strongly encouraged in public debate in Queensland. In contrast to most other colonies, immigration in

²⁶⁸ Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 112; Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 17, 69.

²⁶⁹ Perceived threats to racial purity acted as an external, unifying force (Yarwood and Knowling, *Race relations in Australia*, p. 226). See also Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and prejudice: the politics and diplomacy of racial discrimination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), p. 53.

²⁷⁰ Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, p. 120.

²⁷¹ Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 120-25.

²⁷² In 1897, Natal became the first region to introduce indirect legislation restricting immigration (Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 113-15). The decision to introduce indirect restrictions was not unique to the British commonwealth; there was similar legislation in north America (Lauren, *Power and prejudice*, pp. 51-8; Markus, *Australian race relations*, p. 115).

²⁷³ Yarwood, "The White Australia policy", p. 165. In 1905, the requirement was to "any prescribed language" so as not to offend the Japanese government (Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, p. 125).

Queensland increased after 1860.²⁷⁴ Immigrants from certain racial backgrounds, however, were not acceptable. In fact, many Queenslanders would have preferred to restrict immigration to British citizens. Although this preference was common in Australia at this time,²⁷⁵ David Cameron argues that it was more marked in Queensland, particularly under Labor administrations.²⁷⁶ Racial tensions in Queensland thus led to intense debate about the type of immigrants desired. Ethnocentrism in the state was reinforced by its restrictive immigration policy. In 1902, Horace Tozer, the Agent-General for Queensland, stated in his annual report that the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 was attracting bad publicity, and acting as a deterrent to labour and capital, an opinion which he also stated publicly.²⁷⁷ His views, however, were not shared by the majority in Queensland.²⁷⁸

The belief that white immigration was desperately needed for the sake of Queensland's future population and racial fitness was constantly reiterated in newspapers throughout the early twentieth century. During the 1908 election campaign, the *Queenslander* advocated "a strong forward movement in land settlement, the encouragement of people to

²⁷⁴ Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australia and immigration: 1788-1988* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), p. 19; it also increased in South Australia.

²⁷⁵ "Australian immigration", *Age* (Melbourne), 1 January 1912, p. 6; "Danger of an empty land", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 January 1912, p. 14.

²⁷⁶ Cameron, *An historical assessment of economic development, manufacturing and the political economy in Queensland*, p. 34. See also Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p. 404.

²⁷⁷ Horace Tozer, "Report of the Agent-General for Queensland for the year 1902", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 2 (1903), pp. 415-16.

²⁷⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 91 (19 August 1903), p. 335.

come here from other lands".²⁷⁹ In 1910, the *Week* admonished its readers, claiming that:

A large number of Australians fail to grasp some of the most elementary features of the immigration problem. The most elementary is that the supply of sound white immigrants in coming years is likely to fall considerably below the demand. Australia must show greater inducements than rival countries, which are equally anxious to obtain the best kind of immigrants ... Australia also will have to import its immigrants young, and rear them in its own atmosphere for its own ends.²⁸⁰

The London *Mail* became involved in the debate, arguing that "An embargo upon children is a danger to the whole community. The exclusion of coloured races imposes the responsibility of putting no obstacle in the way of desirable immigrants."²⁸¹ The *Mail* thus articulated more explicitly the reason for the encouragement of white immigration: the exclusion of other races.

Both the *Week* and the *Queenslander* often reported on the arrival of new immigrants in Brisbane, usually focusing on the health and appearance of the immigrants as indicators of their potential value to the state. In 1910, the *Week* stated that a group of newly arrived immigrants all "appeared to be in good health and spirits, and capable of doing their fair share of the development of the potantialities [sic] of this vast State."²⁸²

²⁷⁹ "Election issues", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 February 1908, p. 5.

²⁸⁰ "Married immigrants", *Week* (Brisbane), 15 April 1910, p. 12.

²⁸¹ "Immigrants in Australia: a lady's counsel: letter to *The Times*", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 2 April 1910, p. 37.

²⁸² "Immigrants arrived", *Week* (Brisbane), 3 June 1910, p. 27.

Sometimes these reports focused on racial issues.²⁸³ Germans were among the most favoured immigrants, at least until World War I: "By constitution and adaptability the German is well fitted to face the difficulties of pioneer settlement."²⁸⁴ On another occasion, the newspaper stated that German immigrants "all appear to be a fine stamp of colonist".²⁸⁵

The *Week* encouraged immigration, and did not seem particularly concerned with racial issues.²⁸⁶ In contrast, the *Queenslander* firmly encouraged immigration from Britain, and more particularly England.²⁸⁷ For this reason, it was extremely critical of the Labor Party's immigration policies. In 1910 the newspaper condemned the party for its "antagonistic and irreconcilable attitude" towards immigration, claiming that it was attempting "to capture the votes of the unemployed and unemployable".²⁸⁸ It stated:

When the danger of our unoccupied spaces is recognised there should be little hesitation on the part of fair minded persons in following up the good work of encouraging immigrants to our shores.²⁸⁹

²⁸³ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 January 1910, p. 10; "Russian immigrants", *Week* (Brisbane), 6 May 1910, p. 30.

²⁸⁴ "Blocked German immigrants", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 8 January 1910, p. 3.

²⁸⁵ "German immigrants", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 June 1910, p. 39.

²⁸⁶ See, for example, "Russian immigrants", *Week* (Brisbane), 6 May 1910, p. 30.

²⁸⁷ *Queenslander*, 5 March 1910, p. 6; "English emigrants", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 May 1910, p. 6; "More immigrants for Queensland", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 February 1914, p. 29.

²⁸⁸ "Immigration", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 30 April 1910, p. 4.

²⁸⁹ "Immigration", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 30 April 1910, p. 4.

The Labor Party's attitude to immigration at this time was exemplified by Charles Collins, who told parliament in 1910 that although he believed the marriage rate was too low, and the death rate too high, he did not believe in immigration as a solution.²⁹⁰

In 1920, the *Queenslander* stated that although immigrants were badly needed, only "white" immigrants should be encouraged.²⁹¹ By this stage, however, immigration from Britain was slowing. Many British commentators expressed eugenic concerns about the loss of the best types of people through emigration. In 1920, the *Queenslander* reported A. M. Drysdale's statement that there was "a natural objection in the Mother Country to the emigration of our most virile and best-trained adults."²⁹² Drysdale thus implied that England was losing its best "stock", and therefore jeopardising its standards. It was inferred that Australia and Queensland, as destinations for British immigrants, were benefiting from British losses.

²⁹⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 105 (7 September 1910), p. 787. In the same year, William Lennon, the leader of the opposition, criticised government spending on immigration, stating that the Labor party would prefer more nominated immigrants and farm labourers (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 106 (14 October 1910), pp. 1490-91; Lennon's motion to reduce the amount allocated to immigration was defeated (*Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 106 (19 October 1910), pp. 1565-66).

²⁹¹ "Australian immigration proposals", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 5 June 1920, p. 27.

²⁹² "Peopling the empire", *Queenslander*, 15 May 1920, p. 6.

The *Queenslander* was strongly critical of the Labor party's policy on immigration throughout the 1920s.²⁹³ English sources were often quoted in support of immigration. In 1920, the *Queenslander* reported that a London paper, the *Financier*, had said that Queensland needed more immigrants.²⁹⁴ During the 1920s, under the leadership of T. J. Ryan, the Labor Party acknowledged that closer settlement could only be achieved by policy of steady immigration.²⁹⁵ In 1924, the Labor party was again attacked, this time by Dr Sharp, the Archbishop of Queensland, who stated that if the "White Australia" policy was to be maintained, Australia had to be prepared to receive any British immigrants who wished to come.²⁹⁶ Sharp attacked the "inconsistency" of Labor politicians who advocated policies of a white Australia, but were not prepared to receive migrants.²⁹⁷

In addition to the desire to maintain a "White Australia", immigration was needed in Queensland in order to fill labour shortages. Even this had a racial element, however, as it was related to the development of European settlement in north Queensland, and the anxiety to remove

²⁹³ "Instructing the Premier: immigration and unemployment questions: deputation from the Trades Hall", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 February 1920, p. 15; "Labour and immigration", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 May 1920, p. 8; "Labour rebukes Labour: more needed, not fewer: extraordinary incapacity somewhere", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 May 1920, p. 16.

²⁹⁴ "Queensland immigration", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 February 1920, p. 14.

²⁹⁵ Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s: a history of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 67.

²⁹⁶ "Need for immigrants: 'White Australia': how to maintain it", *Brisbane Courier*, 17 January 1924, p. 11.

²⁹⁷ "Need for immigrants", *Brisbane Courier*, 17 January 1924, p. 11.

“coloured” labour from the region.²⁹⁸ An article in the *Queenslander* in 1908 stated that there was an “unprecedented deficiency in the supply of suitable labour” in the state at this time.²⁹⁹ The newspaper reported that a deputation representing the primary industries had waited on the premier, W. Kidston, to urge “the adoption of such steps as would secure the introduction to Queensland of sufficient labour to meet the demands of the agricultural and dairying industries.”³⁰⁰ Despite the “unprecedented deficiency” and perceived need for labour, this deputation stated that the first requirement for “suitable” labourers was that they should be selected from the United Kingdom and the north of Europe. In a later article, the *Queenslander* discussed the perceived shortage of domestic servants in the state, and argued that immigrants should be encouraged to undertake the work.³⁰¹ The *Queenslander* stated that although many young women were more than ready to “take advantage of the free passage arrangements”, the majority of them had to be rejected, “as for physical and various other reasons they do not fulfil the specified requirements.”³⁰²

This demonstrated one of the problems with encouraging immigrants from only a small numbers of countries, which was that these

²⁹⁸ Bolton, *A thousand miles away*, p. vii; Department of Immigration, *Australia and immigration*, p. 19.

²⁹⁹ “A forward movement”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 April 1908, p. 33.

³⁰⁰ “A forward movement”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 April 1908, p. 33.

³⁰¹ “Queensland immigrants”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 March 1908, p. 32. The newspaper emphasised the shortage by stating that even Tozer, the Immigration Agent, had had great trouble finding servants, having recently had to wait a whole week before one could be found.

³⁰² “Queensland immigrants”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 14 March 1908, p. 32.

immigrants often did not meet the physical and medical requirements for immigration to Queensland. For example, in 1929, immigration agents in Australia were directed, in the case of approved British migrants suffering from minor afflictions, to note their particular affliction on their documents, in order to prevent them from suffering inconvenience.³⁰³ Many of these migrants found difficulty at Customs, and were possibly turned away.

The fact that such physical restrictions were in place also reflected the belief that only healthy immigrants should be encouraged. This belief had its basis in a variety of arguments, many of which were practical. There was some eugenic influence also, in fears that if “unfit” immigrants were allowed into Queensland, they would be responsible for a degeneration in the population of the state. In the first half of the twentieth century, Queensland customs officials rejected immigrants who suffered from perceived physical or mental defects which may have led to their becoming a charge upon the public or upon a charitable institution. This was similar to legislation in force in other states, and reflected practical concerns, but also eugenic influence.³⁰⁴

³⁰³ F. J. Quinlan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, Canberra to the Official Secretary in Great Britain (transmitted through the Prime Minister’s Department), 15 March 1929, in-letter 1949 of 1929, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁰⁴ In 1911, the Australasian Medical Congress Transactions argued for the medical inspection of immigrants to Australia, in order for the Australian government to be able to reject undesirable immigrants and thus provide a “second form of segregation” (Diana Wyndham, *Striving for national fitness: eugenics in Australia, 1910s to 1930s*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1996, p. 314). The Racial Hygiene Association of New South Wales also supported the medical examination of migrants (“Migrants and health: medical examination”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 July 1927, p. 15).

Between 1913 and 1932, a register was kept of Queensland Customs requests for reports, or the results of such reports, into the possible sponsors of "defective" immigrants.³⁰⁵ Generally, the reason for requesting the report was not given. Prospective immigrants were required to supply a sponsor either of good character, or good financial circumstances, or who could guarantee work or financial support, or in the last resort pay the passage home if they were to become a burden.³⁰⁶ In 1924, the Commonwealth government agreed to accept financial responsibility for the repatriation of physically or mentally unsuitable migrants.³⁰⁷ Despite the importance placed on medical examinations, some cases slipped through; epileptics were mentioned as being particularly hard to identify.³⁰⁸

Nominated immigrants were often rejected after medical examinations,³⁰⁹ although there were other reasons for cancelling nominations.³¹⁰ That

³⁰⁵ Entrance to Commonwealth of persons suffering from defects physically or mentally which may lead to their becoming a charge upon the public or upon a public or charitable institution, POL/J38, Queensland State Archives.

³⁰⁶ For example, 3 November 1925, entry 36156 of 1925, and 36179 of 1924 are very brief (POL/J38, Queensland State Archives). The provision of the legislation to prevent immigrants becoming a burden on society is still a part of immigration legislation in Australia at the present time.

³⁰⁷ L. J. Hurley, Deputy Director, Commonwealth Immigration Office, Melbourne to E. H. Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 20 November 1924, in-letter 4122 of 1924, copy of proceedings of Conference of Commonwealth and State Immigration Officers enclosed, p. 23, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives. This conference was attended by E. H. Abell and R. Y. Holmes from Queensland.

³⁰⁸ Copy of proceedings of Conference of Commonwealth and State Immigration Officers enclosed, p. 23, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives.

³⁰⁹ Copy of outgoing letter to W. G. Wood, Government Printing Office, Brisbane, 21 February 1927, out-letter C4538, IMM/2, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁰ Immigration Agent to H. Smith, Thornton and Pearce, Courier Buildings, Brisbane, 15 January 1926, out-letter C1989, IMM/2, Queensland State Archives.

not a great deal of evidence was needed to raise questions about a migrant is indicated by a case from 1913. In this year, Customs requested a report on a G. Hamilton, who, according to information received by Customs, had a mentally defective son.³¹¹ The requested report stated that the son was not mentally deficient, but simply shy among strangers.³¹² This record also indicates the ease with which children could be placed into the category of "mentally defective", on the basis of very little available information. Further evidence of this is provided by a 1927 incident. The Immigration Agent in Brisbane wrote to the Development and Migration Commission about a T. E. Thompson, a prospective immigrant whom Abell wished to reject. Abell stated that the only evidence that Thompson was unfit was certificates given by Drs Dodds and Elkington, but Abell believed that these certificates should be sufficient.³¹³ The boy was not suitable for placement in a mental asylum, but Elkington's certificate showed that he was unlikely to ever be a satisfactory, self-supporting migrant.

³¹¹ Entrance to Commonwealth of persons suffering from defects physically or mentally which may lead to their becoming a charge upon the public or upon a public or charitable institution, 5 November 1913, entry 28334 of 1913, POL/J38, Queensland State Archives. The boy's age was not recorded.

³¹² Entrance to Commonwealth of persons suffering from defects physically or mentally which may lead to their becoming a charge upon the public or upon a public or charitable institution, 2 December 1913, entry 28334 of 1913, POL/J38, Queensland State Archives.

³¹³ E. H. Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane to Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne, 24 September 1927, in-letter not provided, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives.

Employment and health were stressed in applications for assisted passages for immigrants.³¹⁴ Assisted migration applied only to British immigrants. Requests for assisted passage for immigrants from other European countries were rejected as a matter of course.³¹⁵ For prospective migrants who were British by "birth or origin", however, it was only required that they "be in sound bodily and mental health and to be of good character to enable [them] to gain entry to Australia."³¹⁶ For applicants from other European countries, emigration to Australia was considerably harder.

A 1928 memorandum from the Chief Medical Officer in London, sent to the Director of the Migration and Settlement Office in Australia, and passed on to the states, asserted that medical examiners of prospective migrants should understand both the advantages and disadvantages of intelligence tests.³¹⁷ Abell replied that the medical examination of

³¹⁴ For example, in 1938, a Frederick Barker in Cairns wrote to the Immigration Agent in Brisbane, nominating his niece for migration, stating that she was "of good health and physique", and that he would employ her (Frederick Leslie Barker, Cairns to Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 8 November 1938, in-letter 1619 of 1938, IMM/177, Queensland State Archives).

³¹⁵ See, for example, Mrs F. Rayden, Shanghai to V. G. Bowden, Australian Trade Commissioner in China, Shanghai, 24 September 1938, in-letter not provided (copy); H. S. Bailey, Nundah to Minister for Immigration, Brisbane, 12 November 1938, in-letter 1693 of 1938 (enclosed copy of previous letter); R. Y. Holmes, Immigration Agent, Brisbane to Bailey, 15 November 1938, in-letter 1693 of 1938; Immigration Agent to B. Cozens, Woombye, 15 June 1938, in-letter not provided, IMM/177, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁶ Frank B. Common, House, Land and General Commission Agent, Toowoomba to Immigration Office, Brisbane, 20 August 1937, in-letter 1309 of 1937; Holmes, Immigration Agent to Common, 23 August 1937, in-letter not provided, IMM/177, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁷ H. Farrands, Acting Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne to Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 21 June 1928, in-letter 14444 of 1928, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives. The IQ tests used were the Stanford Revision and Binet Simon tests (Memorandum addressed by Chief Medical Officer at Australia

migrants was generally satisfactory, although there had been recent cases where boys who had been sent to Queensland under a farm apprenticeship scheme had passed intelligence tests, but had turned out disastrously.³¹⁸

In the late 1920s, there was concern over immigrants who had to be admitted to mental hospitals. There was a fear that mentally disturbed migrants, especially those arriving through assisted passages, were slipping through medical inspections, and thus becoming a charge on the state. Concern over mentally “unfit” immigrants was not new, and was not confined to Queensland. Elizabeth Lunbeck argues that the issue of insane foreigners was first raised the mid-nineteenth century, but was revived after the turn of the century, with a new, eugenic perspective.³¹⁹ In Canada, fears that a disproportionate number of immigrants were mentally “defective” contributed to the popularity of eugenic ideas in the country during the 1930s.³²⁰ Many eugenicists attempted to link a rise in feeble-mindedness with immigration.³²¹

House, London to Director of Migration and Settlement Office, Melbourne, in-letter 14444 of 1928, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives).

³¹⁸ Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane to Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne, 29 June 1928, in-letter 14444 of 1928, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives.

³¹⁹ Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The psychiatric persuasion: knowledge, gender and power in modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 370.

³²⁰ Angus McLaren, “The creation of a haven for ‘human thoroughbreds’: the sterilization of the feeble-minded and the mentally ill in British Columbia”, *Canadian Historical Review*, 68, 2 (1986), p. 129. Ian Dowbiggin argues that the medical inspection of migrants was almost universally approved by Canadian psychiatrists during the early twentieth century (“Keeping this young country sane”: C. K. Clarke, immigration restriction, and Canadian psychiatry, 1890-1925”, *Canadian Historical Review*, 76, 4 (1995), pp. 599, 609).

³²¹ “The science of race building”, *The Times* (London), 26 July 1912, p. 4; “Health of the nations: eugenists on the size of families”, *The Times* (London), 27 July 1912, p.

In 1927, Randolph Bedford, the Labor member for Warrego, gave a speech on immigration, discussing the practice of deportations for criminal offences, particularly for British migrants.³²² He excused these migrants for their crimes, stating that their behaviour was a result of their low conditions, but he continued that Australia would be to blame if it allowed these people to settle in Australia.³²³ He continued that the “polyglot nationals” of Southern Europe were allowed to enter America because they were ignorant of the language and thus could “quickly be divided industrially”.³²⁴ Bedford was concerned with how far a country should go

... in its devotion to Imperial ideals in introducing people who are absolutely valueless to Australia as citizens. It must stand to reason that the alien European in possession of health and capacity is immeasurably better for Australia than the admission of all Britishers, supposing them to include a proportion of criminals and a large proportion of unemployables.³²⁵

Bedford’s ideas owed a great deal to eugenic conceptions of heredity, and the value of introducing healthy immigrants. They also illustrate the complexity of views about the “white” race. Bedford’s opinions on what constituted “whiteness” were considerably broader than many others;

4; “Education Week: racial problems: reproducing the unfit”, *The Times* (London), 4 January 1927, p. 15; *New York Times*, 27 January 1927, p. 16; Dowbiggin, “Keeping this young country sane”, pp. 620-21; Doyle, *Bordering on the body*, p. 14; O’Brien, “Protecting the social body”, p. 192.

³²² *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 813.

³²³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 813.

³²⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 813.

³²⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 814.

conversely, his virulent opposition to the migration of "coloured" races into Queensland was extreme even for the time.³²⁶

He went on to quote an article by Professor Julian Huxley, published in the London *Evening Standard*, in support of his opposition to "indiscriminate immigration".³²⁷ Huxley did not accept that countries such as America and Australia had a responsibility to accept more immigrants. Rather, he argued that overcrowded countries should lower their birth-rates.³²⁸ Bedford also quoted a war journalist's opinion that the men from the dominions were much healthier than the British. The journalist also stated that "Our men could only draw on such funds of nerve and physique, knowledge and skill, as we had put into the bank for them", and concluded that "Like the syphilitic children of some jolly Victorian rake, they could only bring to this harsh examination such health and sanity as all the pleasant vices of Victorian and Edwardian England had left them".³²⁹ These sentiments clearly focused on heredity as the major factor in racial fitness. Bedford asked, "if these great racial differences apply to an army [which is chosen] ... how much more do they apply to the great masses what [sic] were not good enough for an army ...", and consequently, in Bedford's opinion, even less worthy of

³²⁶ Richard Dyer, "White", *Screen*, 29, 4 (1988), pp. 44-7; Evans, "Keep white the strain", pp. 4-5; Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, pp. 69-70; Smith, "Baby's picture is always treasured", pp. 197-220.

³²⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 814.

³²⁸ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 814.

³²⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), pp. 814-15.

Australian citizenship.³³⁰ He concluded by arguing that Australia was the country with the best future and best conditions in the world and if it was to maintain both then immigrants must be carefully selected and “restrictions against the halt, the lame, and the needy” be upheld.³³¹

In the same year, the report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane included a letter on alien patients in mental institutions from F. W. Mole, the Public Curator, accompanied by a copy of the medical examination prospective immigrants were expected to undergo.³³² This report was collected by the government along with a cutting from the newspaper *Smith's Weekly* entitled “Why Queensland feels mad: foreign lunatics cost the state £124, 000”.³³³ In October 1929, Bedford referred in Queensland parliament to a newspaper discussion of the annual report of the Inspector-General for the Insane in New South Wales, which pointed out that

... in three years sixty British migrants and nineteen foreign migrants in the State had been declared insane ... They gave some idea of the extent to which mentally defective migrants are being admitted to this State.³³⁴

³³⁰ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 815.

³³¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 149 (4 November 1927), p. 815.

³³² Report on the Hospitals for the Insane, Goodna, Ipswich, Toowoomba, 22 March 1927, in-letter 2274 of 1927, A/31799, Queensland State Archives.

³³³ Enclosed with Report on the Hospitals for the Insane, Goodna, Ipswich, Toowoomba, 22 March 1927, in-letter 2274 of 1927, A/31799, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁴ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 153 (23 October 1929), p. 1105. Bedford stated that thirty-one mentally “defective” migrants had been deported during the same period.

The Development and Migration Commission was anxious to discover the extent to which assisted migrants were being placed in asylums at this time.³³⁵ No records were kept relating to whether the overseas born patients in mental hospitals were assisted migrants or not.³³⁶ The Home Secretary stated, however, that with any patients born overseas, inquiries were made into the date of their arrival in the Commonwealth, and action was taken to deport those who had been admitted within three years of arrival, whether they were assisted migrants or not. This concern in Queensland may have been motivated by a case in 1928, in which an assisted migrant was declared by the Medical Referee to be of sub-normal intelligence, and yet was approved for an assisted passage.³³⁷ The referee was one of two recently appointed full-time permanent medical officers, whose job was to conduct the medical examinations. This migrant's case was raised with the London Office.

The copy of the subsequent report by the Chief Medical Officer, C. L. Park, attached to the file, explained that Binet-Simon tests were used by medical officers to determine the standard of intelligence and mentality

³³⁵ Immigration Agent, Brisbane to Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne, 9 March 1929, in-letter not provided (draft only); Immigration Agent to Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne, 20 February 1929, in-letter 3603 of 1929; Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne to Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 13 February 1929, in-letter not provided (this last letter was a request to expedite a reply), IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁶ Home Secretary to Immigration Agent, 4 March 1929, in-letter 1532 of 1929, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁷ Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne to Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 9 March 1928, in-letter 5949 of 1928, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

of prospective migrants.³³⁸ Park stressed the desirability of investigating the mentality and intelligence of every applicant. This was done through the use of Binet-Simon tests to determine the IQ of each applicant. The cut-off score for a person being considered able to maintain themselves was seventy, while the average was one hundred. The use of Binet-Simon tests was supported by the results of an inquiry undertaken by a medical officer of the Board of Education. Park, however, continued that the acceptance or rejection of migrants on “a purely educational test” was “complicated by the fact that there are two aspects to the question of what we might call mental deficiency.”³³⁹ One was an educational defect; the other was an anti-social tendency:

Unfortunately a child may be found to be retarded educationally but to present no outstanding anti-social tendency and conversely a migrant may not be retarded educationally but at the same time may have such anti-social tendency as would prevent him being useful as a citizen in any community.³⁴⁰

Park also stated that the prevalence of nocturnal enuresis, particularly amongst boys, was causing some concern to medical examiners. This was stressed by a letter from Park to the federal office, which stated that special attempts should be made to detect enuresis, since individuals

³³⁸ Copy of report from C. L. Park, Chief Medical Officer to the Director of Migration, 27 January 1928, in-letter not provided, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³³⁹ Park to the Director of Migration, 27 January 1928, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁴⁰ Park to the Director of Migration, 27 January 1928, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

would naturally conceal it.³⁴¹ Concern about mentally “unfit” immigrants arriving in Queensland continued into the 1930s. In his annual report for 1933, the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane, H. Byam Ellerton, responded to these concerns, claiming that the arrival of such immigrants was not a major problem, as patients admitted to mental hospitals within three years of immigration to Australia were liable to deportation.³⁴²

There was equal concern with the physical fitness of prospective migrants as with their mental fitness.³⁴³ In 1910, the *Week* stated that Australia wanted only “the best class of folk” to immigrate, “so that our population will benefit by the reinforcements of brain, brawn, and muscle.”³⁴⁴ The concern with how to achieve the “best” population reflected the influence of ideas about racial fitness. A link between physical efficiency and racial fitness was common in the early twentieth century. In 1910, the *Queenslander* reported that a “race of men bigger and more efficient physically than any known in the history of the world is being developed in America, according to statistics just published by

³⁴¹ C. L. Park, Chief Medical Officer to the Director of Migration, 27 January 1928, in-letter not provided (copy only), IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁴² H. Byam Ellerton, “Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane”, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1 (1934), p. 849.

³⁴³ H. Farrands, Acting Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne to Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 28 October 1927, in-letter 1848 of 1926; Abell to Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne, 21 November 1927, in-letter 25013 of 1927, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives. The nomination form for assisted passage to Australia asked whether any member of family suffered from “physical bodily defect” (IMM/175, Queensland State Archives).

³⁴⁴ “Nominated immigrants”, *Week* (Brisbane), 10 June 1910, p. 19.

the Universities of Harvard and Yale.”³⁴⁵ The newspaper qualified this statement, arguing that “owing to the inundation of America by hordes of aliens, the average stature of the inhabitants of this country has undergone recently a slight decline”.³⁴⁶

In Queensland parliament in the same year, William Hamilton, a Labor member, expressed his concern that epileptic immigrants were managing to get past the medical examinations, which he feared would lead to other countries sending their surplus populations to Queensland.³⁴⁷ Two years later, the *Queenslander* reported the views of an F. B. Scammell, a member of the Australia and American Agency in London, who expressed his doubt as to whether free passages or very low passage rates were effective in attracting “a good type of settler.”³⁴⁸ He stated that:

There is no room for the flotsam and jetsam of British cities. ... [Such immigrants] have not in them the self-respect, and the ambition, and the sturdy health wanted in the people who are to build up the future of Queensland.³⁴⁹

Scammell’s statements thus combined notions of class and personal character with eugenic overtones. The *Queenslander* was concerned about consumptive immigrants arriving in Australia, although the newspaper appeared to place more faith in medical inspections than did

³⁴⁵ “Race of bigger men: increasing size of students in America”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 5 February 1910, p. 32.

³⁴⁶ “Race of bigger men”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 5 February 1910, p. 32.

³⁴⁷ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 105 (8 September 1910), p. 841.

³⁴⁸ “Immigration”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 July 1912, p. 3.

³⁴⁹ “Immigration”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 July 1912, p. 3.

Hamilton.³⁵⁰ By the late 1920s, such concerns were apparent in the fear that too great a leniency had been extended in the past to assisted migrants as far as physical fitness was concerned.³⁵¹ These examples show that in both government and public discourse on immigration, those immigrants who were both desired and selected were those who were physically and mentally “fit”. This was partly for practical reasons, but it was also partly in order to protect and improve the future Queensland population.

As has been seen, Australian governments also encouraged immigration to counter a perceived threat of invasion from neighbouring “coloured” nations, and this tendency was marked in Queensland.³⁵² In April 1910, the *Queenslander* stated that it was particularly important in Queensland “that our immigrants should consist of the young and vigorous”, because the population had to be built up for prosperity and defence.³⁵³ In 1914, Sir George Reid, the High Commissioner, told a banquet that “immigration is the finest bulwark against any foreign menace”.³⁵⁴ In the same year, the *Queenslander* reported that Mr Justice Bevan, judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, had argued for the great necessity of populating the territory to prevent hostile

³⁵⁰ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 31 January 1914, p. 9.

³⁵¹ Farrands, Acting Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne to Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 19 July 1927, in-letter 181 of 1927, IMM/175, Queensland State Archives.

³⁵² Encel, “The nature of race prejudice in Australia”, p. 34; McQueen, *A new Britannia*, pp. 47-9; Young, *A white Australia*, pp. 42, 55-6.

³⁵³ “Immigration”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 9 April 1910, p. 3.

³⁵⁴ “The risks of Australia”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 10 January 1914, p. 20.

invasion.³⁵⁵ Although he did not believe that such an invasion would happen, he mentioned that Java's population was increasing rapidly. This statement can be seen partly as a vague threat as to the result of failing to populate northern Australia. It can also be interpreted as a reference to the supposed fertility of "coloured" races. During the interwar period, the idea of filling the empty spaces of the north became important for national defence, but support for the White Australia policy limited progress in this area.³⁵⁶

Hostility to southern European migrants intensified in the early 1920s.³⁵⁷ In 1925, the Queensland government, under the leadership of W. N. Gillies, established a Royal Commission into "the social and economic effects of increase in the number of aliens in North Queensland".³⁵⁸ This commission focused on racial issues, but its conclusions were based on practical concerns about the assimilation of immigrants, rather than future racial fitness. It found that the effect of a rapid increase in the number of immigrants in a community was to create anti-foreign feeling, and recommended controlling or neglecting immigration.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ "Northern Territory", *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 17 January 1914, p. 40.

³⁵⁶ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 67.

³⁵⁷ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 68.

³⁵⁸ Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, pp. 147-48.

³⁵⁹ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 69; Lyn Henderson, "Economic or racist?: Australia's reactions to Italians in north Queensland, 1921-1939", in Reynolds, *Race relations in north Queensland*, p. 335.

Correspondence between immigration agents in Queensland and the government in the 1930s indicates a conflict between Queensland agents and federal decisions about immigrants. In 1930, E. H. Abell, the Immigration Agent in Brisbane, was reprimanded by the Commonwealth Development and Migration Commission office in Melbourne for submitting too many nominated immigrants who did not fit into any category.³⁶⁰ Nominations were to be limited to the reunion of families, with a few special cases. Abell, in replying, expressed his surprise at the number of rejected immigrants.³⁶¹ He argued that all the nominated immigrants would benefit the state, and would not interfere with the numbers of unemployed. He further stated that it

... would have surprised you if you had been on the wharf when the "Orama" and the "Ormonde" arrived. There were five cases for me and about three times the number of Italians, and on the "Ormonde" there were sixteen cases, and seemed to be about double that number of Italians. If a stranger had been there he would have thought that he was at some foreign port instead of a British one.³⁶²

This seems to indicate that a significant aspect of Abell's concerns was racial, as he appeared to object to the number of Italian immigrants. Abell also argued that conditions for immigration should be relaxed in Queensland, due to its size, and the availability of employment. He

³⁶⁰ W. Stillman, Development and Migration Commission, Commonwealth Offices, Melbourne to Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 17 April 1930, in-letter 7646 of 1930, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶¹ Abell to Stillman, 28 April 1930, in-letter not provided (draft only), IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶² Abell, to Stillman, 28 April 1930, (draft only), IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

stated that Queensland boys did not work well on farms, and therefore more skilled immigrants were needed. This issue did not end here, as Abell was again chastised in 1931 for submitting nominated migrants who did fit the approved categories.³⁶³ It appears from the evidence that he wanted to continue accepting nominations of boys for farm work and girls for domestic service. Racial issues continued to dominate discussions concerned with immigration into Queensland throughout the 1920s and the 1930s. The government was concerned with the racial groups allowed into Australia, and placed restrictions on various racial groups.³⁶⁴

In a 1935 speech to the New Settlers League, Cilento urged continued adherence to the "White Australia" policy, arguing that it was essential for Australia's future.³⁶⁵ Such views, however, were contrary to prevailing trends in migration. The immigration agreement between Britain and the dominions was suspended during the 1930s.³⁶⁶ In 1938, the *Courier Mail* reported that there were more German and Italian migrants arriving, and fewer British ones.³⁶⁷ An editorial in the newspaper stated that Australia needed thousands of energetic, capable and hard-working immigrants,

³⁶³ Secretary for Transport, Migration Branch, Melbourne to Abell, Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 12 February 1931, in-letter not provided, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶⁴ Quinlan, Assistant Secretary, Government Immigration Bureau, Canberra to Acting Secretary, Development and Migration Commission, Melbourne, 19 July 1928, in-letter 7848 of 1928, IMM/72, Queensland State Archives.

³⁶⁵ Cilento, opening address to the New Settlers League, p. 1, UQFL MSS 44/93, Box 17, Fryer Library.

³⁶⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 165 (11 October 1934), p. p. 649.

³⁶⁷ "More foreign immigrants: British stock drift", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 September 1938, p. 1.

“both for defence and development”.³⁶⁸ British migration was slowing, largely because Britain did not want to lose its most efficient workers any more than Australia did. In the same year, the Queensland Agent-General, L. H. Pike, stated that mass migration from England was “a thing of the past”.³⁶⁹ By this time, the British government tended to regard immigration as a problem for the dominions to deal with themselves. The declining birth-rate in Britain was cited as one reason for reduced migration. The Australian government appeared to accept that there was a “rising tide of white alien migration”.³⁷⁰

By 1940, there was less concern with racial issues in immigration, no doubt due to the fact that immigration had slowed considerably.³⁷¹ In 1938, the *Courier Mail* reported a speech given by Senator Wilson, a United Australia Party member from South Australia, who argued that Australia should accept skilled immigrants regardless of their race, because of the shortage of skilled artisans in Australia.³⁷² Although the “White Australia” policy remained in force until the 1970s, it was not adhered to as closely, and was criticised more harshly, by the late 1940s.³⁷³ World War II was a turning point for immigration in

³⁶⁸ “Markets and migrants”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 5 September 1938, p. 6.

³⁶⁹ “Mass migration gone: Britain’s changed attitude”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 7 September 1938, p. 5.

³⁷⁰ “Rapid rise in alien migration: gain increased this year”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 14 October 1938, p. 3.

³⁷¹ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 176 (10 October 1940), p. 653.

³⁷² “Ban on 27 Jewish immigrants: no landing in Brisbane”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 6 October 1938, p. 7.

³⁷³ Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness*, p. 248. After World War II, assumptions about racial superiority were more closely examined. See, for example, “Big problems face Britain in New Year”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 1 January 1947, p. 4.

Australia.³⁷⁴ The vision of redistributing the white population of the empire gave way to the philosophy of “populate or perish”. Population was considered necessary for defence, although this attitude had been apparent in Queensland since the early twentieth century.³⁷⁵ Despite criticism of the White Australia Policy, and the lack of British migrants, Arthur Calwell stated that once immigration was resumed, preference would be given to migrants from Britain.³⁷⁶ Post-war immigration to Queensland was unspectacular; compared with booms in other states, Queensland received less than eight percent of new migrants.³⁷⁷ The main reason for this was the government’s bias towards primary producing.³⁷⁸

There were those who continued to adhere to the ideals of a “White Australia”.³⁷⁹ In *Naught to thirty-three*, Bedford reiterated his views on immigration and the white race in Australia, stating that because Australia was “the best land on earth”, it should be populated by “the best people”.³⁸⁰ He was emphatic that these were not to be found in Assisted Immigration schemes; he characterised those who came in this way as wasters, loafers, drunks, drug addicts and consumptives, stating

³⁷⁴ Department of Immigration, *Australia and immigration*, p. 27.

³⁷⁵ “Dominions Commission and immigration”, *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 7 February 1914, p. 20.

³⁷⁶ “Choice of migrants”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 14 February 1946, p. 1.

³⁷⁷ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 186.

³⁷⁸ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*, p. 187.

³⁷⁹ See Kay Saunders, “The dark shadow of white Australia: racial anxieties in Australian in World War II”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17, 1-2 (1994), pp. 325-41 for an examination of the neglected area of racial rhetoric in Australia during World War II.

³⁸⁰ Bedford, *Naught to thirty-three*, p. 273.

that they should be prevented from entering Australia by official inspections, as would be the case in America.³⁸¹ He continued that the Australian Immigration Commission should be directed by people who knew and loved Australia; they should be given the benefit of medical advice in order that immigrants conformed to high physical and mental standards, and were capable of labour.³⁸²

In the post-war period, there were attempts to revive British immigration in Queensland.³⁸³ Despite efforts during this period to develop the defence of Australia by populating the north of Queensland, the government was not prepared to develop a large post-war migration program to aid this goal. The migrant intake in Queensland between 1946 and 1951 was the lowest of any state, and migrants were discouraged from competing with citizens for jobs, or from congregating in the city.³⁸⁴ Various groups criticised the "White Australia" policy in the 1950s.³⁸⁵ In 1947, the *Courier Mail* reported that the policy was a possible subject of discussion at an upcoming Security Council meeting, and that Australia might attempt to persuade England to veto such a discussion.³⁸⁶ The *Courier* reported that Menzies had said that "Australia did not want the policy because of any stupid idea of superiority or

³⁸¹ Bedford, *Naught to thirty-three*, p. 273.

³⁸² Bedford, *Naught to thirty-three*, p. 274; Bedford also thought migrants should adhere to standards of "comeliness".

³⁸³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 193 (6 October 1948-49), p. 629.

³⁸⁴ Murphy, "Agriculture", p. 213.

³⁸⁵ Palfreman, *The administration of the White Australia Policy*, pp. 120-21.

³⁸⁶ "No help given Britain says Menzies", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 18 February 1947, p. 3.

national exclusiveness, but because we believed this country would be better if its people had some homogenous character in point of race.”³⁸⁷ There was some continued support for the policy after 1950, but it was much reduced.³⁸⁸

The post-war immigration program began in 1945.³⁸⁹ The Australian government eased immigration restrictions in 1956.³⁹⁰ This did not mean that concerns about health and fitness disappeared. As in other areas, these concerns grew in part from ideas about racial fitness from the early twentieth century, but after 1940, and particularly after the Second World War, they appeared in different ways in discourse, and reflected different societal preoccupations. Opinions expressed about immigration in Queensland between 1900 and 1950 reflected beliefs about racial purity and the fitness of the “white” race, as well as practical concerns about immigrants.

Between 1900 and 1950, many opinions were expressed in debate in Queensland about the character of the white residents of the state, focusing on desirable characteristics to be perpetuated by the “white” race. In this sense, the debate encompassed ideas about racial fitness, and reflected the influence of eugenic ideology. Discussion included

³⁸⁷ “No help given Britain says Menzies”, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 18 February 1947, p. 3.

³⁸⁸ Palfreeman, *The administration of the White Australia Policy*, p. 120.

³⁸⁹ Department of Immigration, *Australia and immigration*, p. 29.

³⁹⁰ Department of Immigration, *Australia and immigration*, p. 20.

concerns about increasing the birth-rate and maintaining infant welfare, and about marriage, both of which related to beliefs about women's role and responsibilities, with an emphasis on their role as mothers of the race. Debates about the tropical climate of Queensland and its potentially degenerating effect on white men and women, and about immigration, were also widespread. Many views voiced at this time, while not explicitly eugenic, were marked by sentiments about racial fitness and heredity which were linked to eugenic ideas. Ideas about perpetuating the "white" race in Queensland revealed both a desire to improve the race, and ingrained fears of racial deterioration. They also revealed widespread racial anxieties related to "non-white" races. Although instances of advocacy of controlled reproduction were rare, these widespread beliefs reveal a great deal about Queensland debate between 1900 and 1950.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the incidence of ideas about racial fitness, and its intersection with eugenic ideology, in Queensland between 1900 and 1950. It has found that beliefs about racial fitness were widespread, and indeed were implicit in the power structures of the state. Ideas about “fitness” and “whiteness” that were prevalent during the nineteenth century in Queensland continued into the twentieth. This thesis explored the intersections between these older ideas and eugenic ideology that increased in popularity during the early twentieth century. It found that despite the absence of formal eugenics organisations in Queensland, many of the views articulated at this time were related to eugenic philosophy.

These ideas were often expressed by those in influential positions in the state, in the professions, the government and the public service, and in newspaper editorials. Thus, it is almost certain that they affected the treatment of certain groups in Queensland society. Some of these groups were comprised of marginalised people: the mentally “unfit” and the Aboriginal inhabitants of Queensland. Legislation passed at this time that affected these groups of people was informed by a discourse about improving the race that was affected by eugenic ideology. Other groups that were targeted in discourse about racial

fitness and improvement, although less clearly in legislation, were children, immigrants and women.

Chapter One found that the eugenics movement did not have a large following in Queensland during the first half of the twentieth century. This was due to a number of factors related to the economic, political and social structure of the state. Despite factors working against an acceptance of these ideas, there were a number of competing factors that indicated the widespread presence of concerns about racial fitness. This chapter argued that these ideas adapted to fit concerns specific to the state. This flexibility is important, both in discussing the success of the eugenics movement, and in exploring Queensland society at this time.

Chapter Two found that there were concerns about a growing population of mentally “unfit” adults in Queensland between 1900 and 1929. Although these ideas were occasionally directed towards the mentally ill, they were largely concentrated on the mentally “defective”, particularly the group identified as feeble-minded. It argued that this represented a departure from nineteenth-century debate, which had not distinguished between the two groups. Ideas about this group of people were informed by eugenic arguments, such as the belief that the “feeble-minded” were propagating at a rate disproportionate to their numbers, and were thus producing future generations of defective offspring, thereby causing racial degeneration. Although no legislation

was passed for the care and control of such people before 1930, this chapter argued that the existence of such fears would have had an effect on both the perception and the treatment of mentally “unfit” adults.

Chapter Three found that attitudes toward mentally “unfit” adults in Queensland changed significantly after 1930. Between 1930 and 1950, the discourse on this group of people displayed evidence of much greater anxiety, seen most notably in the repeated description of such people as a “menace”. In contrast to earlier decades, the government expressed interest in legislating for the care and control of these people. The debate about how care and control should be achieved revealed that many prominent people in Queensland society held views which could be considered eugenic. They advocated the sterilisation or segregation of mentally disturbed adults in order to prevent their propagation, and so protect the future of the race. Another suggested solution, the segregation of mentally disturbed adults in order to protect the community, was focused on social control. The rhetoric surrounding both these suggested solutions was usually initially focused on humanitarian aims, but also considered financial issues, thus indicating the complex and overlapping nature of these goals. Despite the various motivations of people involved in the debate, and despite a decrease in interest after 1940, the influence of ideas about racial fitness impacted on the treatment of mentally “unfit” adults.

Chapter Four found that discourse about races other than “white” in Queensland from 1900 to 1950, and particularly concerning the Aboriginal inhabitants of the state, displayed the influence of eugenic ideas. This influence was most clearly seen in fears of miscegenation, and in discussion about that group of people designated “half-castes”. The language used about Aboriginal people was often similar to that used about the mentally “unfit”. As with the mentally “unfit”, many government policies focused on their segregation from the community. This was in part due to concerns about social control, but was also influenced by the desire to control the reproduction of this group of people. Although humanitarian motives were apparent in the formation of this policy, it was clear that the potential impact on the rest of the community was considered of paramount importance. Those people who were unproductive economically faced much harsher penalties than those who were in employment. Thus, as in a discussion about mental “defectives”, motivations were complex. Nevertheless, an examination of legislation targeted at Aboriginal people during this period indicates that eugenic ideas influenced the treatment of this group.

Chapter Five found that debate about children and education most clearly revealed the continuity of ideas about racial fitness before and after World War II. A range of programs implemented during the early twentieth century in Queensland with the (partial) aim of improving

the inheritance of the race continued long after such ideas were no longer explicitly discussed. The decision to introduce school medical inspections was almost certainly influenced in part by considerations of strengthening racial fitness. It was in measures such as these, which were related to positive eugenic ideas, that any influence of the eugenics movement on education in Queensland was seen between 1900 and 1920. More negative discussions, such as those related to the treatment of mentally “defective” children, were not widespread before 1930. Although the issue was raised, the focus at this time, as with mentally “defective” adults, tended to be on concerns about social order and immediate problems, rather than anxieties about the future of the race. During the 1920s, however, this began to change, and some eugenic ideas were expressed in relation to these children, although the incidence of these beliefs diminished after 1940. “Positive” eugenic strategies, such as the encouragement of physical training, were more long-standing.

Chapter Six found that many ideas were expressed at this time about ways to improve the character of the white residents of Queensland. This debate encompassed ideas about racial fitness, and displayed the influence of eugenic ideas. As in other areas, ideas about racial fitness were constantly present in discussion, continuing from the nineteenth century. This chapter argued that as the twentieth century progressed, these ideas were increasingly informed by eugenic ideology. This debate focused on characteristics which should ideally be perpetuated by the “white” race. The range of areas in which these

ideas were present included debate about the birth-rate and infant welfare; the tropical climate of Queensland and its potentially degenerating effect on white men and women; and immigration. As with debate on education, discussions about the “white” race focused on “positive” strategies of improvement. There were, however, continual references to racial degeneration as a reminder of the consequences of failing to maintain the birth-rate and improve the race. Discussions of racial degeneration were influenced by racial tensions and fears of invasion.

Overall, this thesis has argued that the acceptance of eugenic ideas in Queensland differed significantly from the rest of Australia. Racial tensions were more prominent in the state, and were constantly present, even if implicitly, in any discussions about improving the race. Ideas about the “unfit” in Queensland in the nineteenth century were severe. It can be argued that eugenic philosophy did not need to be articulated explicitly in Queensland during the twentieth century, because similar beliefs already informed rhetoric about both marginalised and dominant groups in the state. This thesis has thus contributed to an historiographical examination of debate in a range of discourses in Queensland for the first half of the twentieth century.

After 1940, there is no doubt that ideas about racial fitness were much less explicitly articulated. Most concerns identified by those interested in racial fitness continued after this time, albeit with an altered emphasis. Racial fitness became redefined as national fitness,

with less emphasis on inherited racial improvement, and more on individual improvement as it contributed to the “fitness” of the nation. As this thesis has shown, many issues considered relevant to national fitness replicated those considered relevant to racial fitness, a phenomenon which was not confined to Queensland. In this way, the dissertation has contributed to the historiography of the international eugenics movement.

Both the lack of explicit articulation of eugenic ideas in Queensland, and the continuity between inter-war and post-war ideas on racial fitness raise questions about the usefulness to historians of the term *eugenics*. Ultimately, this thesis argues that the term is useful in focusing certain ideas prevalent in a number of societies during the first half of the twentieth century. The use of eugenics as a focal point of this thesis has illuminated the continuity of ideas across a range of discourses in Queensland at this time, as well as pointing to the way these ideas were continued into the 1950s and beyond.¹

¹ Recent directions in historiography are pointing to continuity between eugenic programs and postwar developments: Catrine Clay and Michael Leapman, *Master race: the Lebensborn experiment in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), pp. 182-87; Frank Dikötter, “Race culture: recent perspectives in the history of eugenics”, *The American Historical Review*, 103, 2 (1998) p. 476; R. Grant Steen, *DNA and destiny: nature and nurture in human behaviour* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1996), pp. 45-8. Advancement in reproductive technology since the 1960s has renewed awareness of eugenic issues; see many of the essays in Ruth F. Chadwick, ed., *Ethics, reproduction and genetic control* (London

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